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The wisdom of Solomon

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THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

BY

W. O. E. OESTERLEY, D.D.

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INTRODUCTION

THE WISDOM LITERATURE

THE Book of Wisdom is one of the most notable among those comprised in the Wisdom, or *Chokmah*, Literature of the Jews. The Books belonging to this Literature which have come down to us are, in addition to that under consideration, Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, and the Wisdom of Ben-Sira (Ecclesiasticus); besides these, some of the later Psalms are evidently the work of *Chakamim*, or "Wise men"; and here and there in what are known as the Pseudepigrapha there are distinct signs of the influence of the "Wise men."¹ We find that already in the days of Jeremiah these "Wise men" formed a distinct class side by side with the priests and prophets, for in Jer. xviii. 18 occur the words: "For the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet." The history of the rise of the "Wise men" dates, however, from much earlier times, for we find both them and *Chokmah* ("Wisdom"), of which they were the exponents, mentioned fairly frequently in the Pentateuch, as well as in the historical and prophetic books of the Old Testament. In Hebrew the words *Chokmah* and *Chakamim* "connote, in general, skill in doing anything, whether in reference to artisans, or goldsmiths, or sailors, or mourning women, or shrewdness of the astrologer, or the magician. In a higher sense it is used in the administration of

¹ e. g. 1 Enoch xxxvii. 1-4, xlii. 1, 2, xlix. 3, li. 3, lxxxii. 2, 3, lxxxiv. 3, xciv. 5, etc.

affairs; in a few instances, as in Hosea xiv. 9, a man is called wise who is far-seeing in religious things (cp. also Deut. iv. 6, Isa. xi. 2)."¹ By degrees the words came to be applied, and used technically, in reference to these latter. So that while in its earlier use wisdom meant ability to do anything, later on it came to be applied to the faculty of saying, and doing, and also of thinking, things which were concerned with religion; and in the Wisdom Literature there is always, ultimately, a religious content in what is called wisdom. "To be able to distinguish truly between good and evil is the means whereby man is enabled to stand in close relationship with God; but since the faculty to distinguish between good and evil is a divine endowment, every form of Wisdom comes from God, so that although the knowledge and fear of the Lord is the highest type of Wisdom, there are less exalted forms of it which are also regarded as part of the one great gift of God; that is to say, what is called worldly wisdom does not differ in kind, but only in degree, from the higher form. In Proverbs and Ecclesiasticus, which belong closely together, and which are the chief exponents of this worldly wisdom in the Wisdom Literature, moral precepts form the main topics; and though different from divine Wisdom, both emanate from the same source, and are ultimately to be traced back to the Giver of all good things."² It is interesting in this connection to recall the fact that according to ancient Babylonian teaching Wisdom dwelt in the depths of the sea with Ea, the creative deity. Apsu, "the deep," is called "the house of Wisdom," because out of it came forth the Wisdom of Ea and the word of Ea. One of the epithets applied to the god Ea is "the lord of Wisdom."³ It is quite possible, remem-

¹ Cp. the present writer's *The Books of the Apocrypha: their Origin, Teaching, and Contents*, p. 233 (1915).

² *Op. cit.*, p. 232.

³ Jeremias, *Das alte Testament im Lichte des alten Orients*, pp. 29, 80 (1904).

bering the close contact between the Jews and Babylonians during the Exile, that extraneous influences were brought to bear upon the Jewish *Chakamim*; but if so, the latter soon went their own way and developed a system of *Chokmah* which was specifically Jewish; for it is certain that in no literature in the world in which the subject of wisdom plays an important part is its essentially religious character so emphasized as in the Wisdom Literature of the Jews.

Some special and interesting points regarding the teaching given in this Literature are worth a brief reference:

i. There are stages of growth and development both as regards conceptions, as well as in the outward form of presenting them. So far as the former is concerned the most important is that which deals with the subject of Wisdom itself. In the earliest portion of this Literature proper, *i. e.* the book of Proverbs from chapter x. onwards, Wisdom is always presented as something which is purely abstract; but in what is, no doubt rightly, generally regarded as the latest portion of this book, *viz.* chapters i.-ix., which may be dated about the third century B.C., Wisdom is personified; this development of conception can be clearly seen in such passages as Prov. viii. 22-31, Wisdom ix. 1, 2, xviii. 15, and many others.

ii. Another point of development, also concerning the conception of Wisdom, is its identification with the Law; this is especially characteristic of Ecclesiasticus. This identification is often taken for granted, while in several passages in that book it is definitely stated. Ben-Sira inculcates the truth that the way to lead a wise life is to live according to the divine commandments, and act accordingly; man in this way makes his human wisdom approximate to the divine; and worldly, practical wisdom, in its many and various forms, falls in with the divine precepts as expressed in the Law. It is easy to see how

by this teaching the identification between Wisdom and the Law comes about almost of necessity; a good example is seen in Eccles. xv. 1:

“For he that feareth the Lord doeth this (*i. e.* seeketh Wisdom),
And he that taketh hold of the Law findeth her (*i. e.* Wisdom).”

See also xix. 20, xxi. 11, and above all xxiv. 23-25:

“All these things (*i. e.* the things concerning Wisdom) are the book of the covenant of God Most High,

The Law which Moses commanded as an heritage for the assemblies of Jacob . . .

Which filleth men with wisdom, like Pison,
And like Tigris in the days of new fruits. . . .”

The development is seen further in the Book of Wisdom, where Wisdom is identified with the holy spirit of the Lord, see i. 4-7, and especially ix. 17:

“And who can know Thy counsel, except Thou give him wisdom,

And send Thy holy spirit from on high?”

And finally we come to the identification of Wisdom with the Word of the Lord in such a passage as ix. 1, 2:

“O God of the fathers, and Lord of mercy,
Who madest all things by Thy Word,
And by Thy Wisdom didst form man. . . .”

The developments concerning the conception of Wisdom in this Literature are thus seen to be of high importance for the study of Christian doctrine. But it must be remembered that this development is not uniform; this will be seen by a brief summary of the conception of Wisdom in the Wisdom Literature. “In the earlier portions of Proverbs Wisdom is always presented as something abstract, except perhaps in xvii. 24. A real personification is found in the later parts. In Job it is the wisdom of experience that normally finds expression; but there is a definite personification in xxxviii. 12-28. In Ecclesiastes Wisdom is always something abstract, and, a

unique element, the estimate of Wisdom is affected by the Preacher pessimism. In Ecclesiasticus all that is taught in the earlier books about Wisdom finds expression, with the exception of the pessimism of Ecclesiastes; the identification of the Law with Wisdom is a striking characteristic. The Jewish-Hellenistic writer of the Book of Wisdom identifies Wisdom with the holy spirit of the Lord, as well as with the Word (in the Jewish sense), and teaches its divine origin and its existence before the creation of the world; this latter point is, however, common to the Wisdom Literature generally."¹

iii. As regards outward form the most noticeable development is the way in which a simple proverb is expanded into what may almost be called a miniature essay. This is not general, but it occurs sufficiently frequently to deserve special notice and to be described as a real development. It will be unnecessary to give examples, for it will be abundantly clear to any reader who comes to study Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom after having read Proverbs.

THE TITLE OF THE BOOK OF WISDOM

The Greek form in which this book has come down to us is without question the original language in which it was written. In all existing Greek manuscripts the book is assigned to Solomon in the title; in the three oldest the title is "The Wisdom of Solomon"; but it is clear that Solomonic authorship was questioned in very early times, for in the Old Latin Version the title runs simply "The Book of Wisdom"; and the Syriac Version, while ascribing it to Solomon, pointedly adds: "of which there is a doubt whether another wise man of the Hebrews wrote it in a prophetic spirit, putting it in the name of Solomon, and it was received."² These words are instructive regarding the way in which the oriental ancient viewed the assigning of a pseudepigraphic title

¹ See the writer's book quoted above, pp. 249 f.

² Quoted by Goodrick, *The Book of Wisdom*, p. 34 (1913).

to a book; it was clearly recognized as a legitimate method for a writer in presenting his point of view. The author desires to put forth what he firmly believes to be wisdom after the manner of Solomon; so he calls it the "Wisdom of Solomon," which a modern author would prefer to describe as "Solomonic Wisdom."

THE BOOK OF WISDOM AND ECCLESIASTES

Bearing out what has just been said we have the interesting and exceedingly probable theory, put forth years ago by Dean Plumptre,¹ that the Book of Wisdom had for one of its main objects, if not its *main* object, the combating of the teaching contained in Ecclesiastes; he says: "Let us remember in what light it [*i. e.* Ecclesiastes] must have presented itself to him [*i. e.* the writer of the Book of Wisdom]. It had not . . . the claim which comes from the reverence due to the authority of a remote antiquity or an unquestioned acceptance. He must have known that it had not been received as canonical without serious opposition, that the strictest school of the Pharisees had been against its reception, that it had seemed to them tainted with the heresy of Epicuræanism and Sadduceeism. If it was interpreted then as it has often been interpreted since, it may have seemed to him to sanction a lawless sensuality, to fall in with the thoughts of those who said, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die,' and to throw doubt, if not denial, on the soul's immortality. Was this, he seems to have asked himself, the true idea of wisdom? Was it not his duty to bring before men another Solomon than that whose experience seemed to end in materialism and pessimism, in the scepticism of an endless doubt? And so he, too, adopts without any hesitation the form of personated authorship." There can, indeed, be little doubt that the erroneous teaching, or what the writer of the Book of Wisdom considered the erroneous teaching

¹ *Ecclesiastes, or, the Preacher*, pp. 70 f.

of Ecclesiastes was constantly in the mind of, at any rate, the author of the first part of the Book of Wisdom. This can be seen by any one who will compare the following passages conveniently tabulated by Barton (*The Book of Ecclesiastes*, pp. 57 f.):

Wisdom ii. 1	with Ecclesiastes ii. 23, v. 1.
„ ii. 2 „ „	iii. 19, ix. 11.
„ ii. 3 „ „	xii. 7.
„ ii. 4 „ „	i. 11, ii. 11, 16, ix. 5.
„ ii. 5 „ „	vi. 12, viii. 8.
„ ii. 6 „ „	ii. 24.
„ ii. 7 „ „	ix. 7.
„ ii. 8 „ „	ix. 8.
„ ii. 9 „ „	iii. 22, v. 18, ix. 8.

In Wisdom ii. 1 ff. ("For they said within themselves, reasoning not aright . . .") the writer is describing the tenets of the ungodly; and what he says agrees not only in substance, but often even verbally, with the corresponding passages in Ecclesiastes. And it is, of course, not only in chapter ii. of the Book of Wisdom that the teaching of Ecclesiastes is combated; the whole attitude and outlook of the two books are fundamentally opposed.

AUTHORSHIP AND COMPOSITION

Most writers on the subject of the authorship of our book realize the difficulty in coming to a definite conclusion. Much is to be said for unity of authorship; and likewise much is to be said for composite authorship. Even among those who favour the former hypothesis the differences in thought, language, and style between the two parts of the book are so marked that they have to assume special reasons for the same author writing in two such differing ways. Thus, for example, Eichhorn believes that though both parts were written by the same author the second must have been written in his youth, the former in his maturer years. Goodrick thinks that "it is possible that a writer who had laid aside his work, dictated

in the beginning by irritation at apostasy and persecution, gave it a new colour by adapting it to philosophic ideas which he had only lately assimilated, and, its original interest having passed with the times of persecution which suggested it, should endeavour to obtain a vogue for it by the direct ascription of it to Solomon."¹ In accordance with this he thinks that the "Solomonic chapters" (vii.-ix.) were added after the rest of the book had been completed. The stylistic and linguistic differences between the two parts of the book are succinctly summed up by Toy,² who says that the style is "relatively simple and direct, with constant regard to the Hebrew principle of parallelism," in the first part, "whilst in the second part it is ambitious, grandiloquent, or turgid, complicated and artificial, often without parallelism." Another point which suggests composite authorship is that in the first part Wisdom plays a very important rôle, whereas in the second part it is scarcely ever mentioned, for in xiv. 2 it is used in quite a different sense from that of the personified semi-divine Wisdom. This fact is certainly striking, for many opportunities occur in the second part for the specific mention of Wisdom; in a number of passages its direct mention would have been appropriate and natural. For an author who has such an exalted conception about Wisdom as the writer of part i., it certainly strikes one as strange to find that in the latter half of the book he ignores all mention of it. But what is in some sense the strongest argument against unity of authorship is the difference in the conception of God presented in the two parts respectively, for in the first part God's action among men is spoken of as indirect, as working through the agency of Wisdom (see, *e. g.*, vii. 22-viii. 1, and viii. 6), while in the second part His action is represented as direct (see, *e. g.*, xiii. 1, xv. 1). These objections to unity of authorship can, it is true, be answered by both Eichhorn's and Goodrick's contentions, given above; for a writer

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 77.

² In the *Encycl. Bibl.*, iv. 5338.

can modify his views with the lapse of time or through the change of circumstances; and one sees, therefore, the difficulty of deciding the question with any approach to certainty. Nevertheless, the most obvious inference from such facts as those given above seems to point to composite authorship. Of one point, however, there can be no question, whether the book was written by one or two men; they were both Jews, and both Hellenistic Jews.

THE DATE OF THE BOOK

Questions of authorship and date run naturally into one another. If it could be finally proved that, as Eichhorn maintained with a good deal of justice, the book came from the hand of one author who wrote the second part in his youth, and in later years prefixed the earlier part, then there might quite conceivably be a period of twenty or thirty years between the two. If, on the other hand, the book contains the work of two different writers, both parts might have been written at the same time, or there might be a considerable interval of time between the two. This, added to the fact that there are no very decisive indications of exact date in the book itself, makes the assigning of a precise date impossible; and we must be content with fixing a *period* within which it is practically certain that the book was written.

The writer in quoting from the Old Testament cites from the Septuagint; thus the words of ii. 12: "And let us lie in wait for the righteous, for he is no use to us," come from the Greek Version of Isa. iii. 10, not from the Hebrew Old Testament. The same is true of xii. 12: "For who shall say, What hast Thou done? Or who shall withstand Thy judgement?" which is quoted from Job. ix. 12, 19; and of xv. 10, where the expression "his heart is ashes," comes from the Septuagint of Isa. xlv. 20. The Greek Version of the prophetic books was in existence before the year B.C. 132, as we learn from the translator's

Prologue to his version of the Wisdom of Ben-Sira. But as regards the book of Job, which belongs to the third, and latest, division of the Old Testament, the "Holy Writings" or *Hagiographa*,¹ we are not able to say definitely when it was translated into Greek, we only know that this was done at a later period than the other two divisions, "The Law" and "The Prophets." Swete, after reviewing the evidence, says: "Thus while the testimony of the first century A.D. does not absolutely require us to believe that all the books of the Hebrew Canon had been translated and were circulated in a Greek version during the Apostolic age, such a view is not improbable; and it is confirmed by the fact that they are all contained in the Canon of the Greek Bible which the Christian Church received from its Jewish predecessors."² Thus the fact that a prophetic book in its Greek form is quoted in our book shows that there is a possibility that, at the very earliest, it³ could have been written in about the middle of the second century B.C.; but the fact that a book from the third division of the Old Testament Canon is quoted in its Greek form suggests a considerably later date as the earliest possible one, say somewhere about the beginning of the Christian era. Of course, neither of these points is conclusive as there is nothing to show that the quotations from Isaiah were made soon after

¹ The words in the Prologue to Ecclesiasticus, "and the rest of the books," are too indefinite for us to assume that the writer referred to the completed division of the *Hagiographa* as we now know it. It must be remembered that some of the books of this division, e. g. Ecclesiastes, Esther, and the Song of Songs, were not even admitted into the Hebrew Canon until some time after the beginning of the Christian era (on this see the present writer's *The Books of the Apocrypha*, pp. 160-177). In the Hebrew of Ecclesiasticus (xlix. 9) Job is mentioned, but only in reference to Ezekiel xiv. 14, 20; nothing is said of Job as we know him from the book that bears his name.

² *Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek*, pp. 26 f.

³ It will have been noticed that Isaiah is quoted in both parts of the book.

or long after the Greek Old Testament had been circulated, excepting possibly this, that as the author once misquotes his text, he may have been quoting from memory, a fact which would suggest that the Greek Bible was familiar to him and that therefore it had been long in circulation; if it was not a misquotation, but a case of a different reading it would point more strongly still to an already long existence of the Septuagint. Small as the point is, it is not without significance.

We must turn next to enquire whether the book contains any references to the historical conditions of the time which might throw light upon its date of composition. In the most recent commentary on our book, that by Goodrick, the author, in his Introduction (pp. 5-17), examines this question with great care. He holds, in common with many other commentators, that the book was written at a time when the Jews were suffering, or had recently suffered, persecution; in support of this reference is made to the passages ii. 10-20, vi. 5-9. In reply to the question as to what persecution the writer had in mind, Goodrick maintains that the allusion is to the persecution under Caligula (A.D. 37-41). After giving the historical details he sums up as follows: "A sore persecution has just been endured; a persecution not to the death indeed, but involving great damage and distress. This persecution, founded in part on gross calumny, had as one of its main features the attempted enforcement of idolatry, and of idolatry in its most insane and revolting form—the worship of a living man. This living man was a prince ruling at a distance, but his commands were enforced by apostate Jews dwelling close at hand, who had surrendered their ancient belief without sincerely adopting any other, and represented no religion except that of Epicuræanism, for which they sought to find their text-book in the so-called Solomon's 'Preacher.' This persecution had been carried on through the agency of the dregs of the populace of Alexandria,

wherein was represented the superstition of ancient Egypt at its worst, combined with hereditary Greek hatred of the Jews, and wild misrepresentation of their religion and ordinances. Finally, a time of temporary repose must be pictured, in which it was possible to substitute severe rebuke for furious complaint. All these conditions the period from A.D. 41-44 presents, and an examination of the book of Wisdom confirms the belief that it was then written."¹ In support of this Goodrick refers to ii. 10-20. While there is much strength in this argument it cannot be regarded as conclusive, for it is not necessary, as Toy has pointed out, "to suppose that the work was composed in the midst of one of the violently hostile movements. The author, even if he lived in a relatively quiet time, would know enough of the general fortunes of his people to paint his pictures of suffering (ii.-v. xiv.). Nor is his reference to the worship of the statues of kings (xiv. 16-20) chronologically decisive, for divine worship was paid to Ptolemy I., and probably to Antiochus II., as well as to Caligula and other Roman emperors. The author is, in fact, as Grimm remarks, giving a learned account of the origin of idolatry, and it is unnecessary to assume that the deified princes to whom he refers were his contemporaries."²

The question as to whether or not our book is pre-Philonian is an important one in this connection; scholars hold different views as to this, but Gregg makes a strong point when he says that "in spite of the remarkable similarity (in some cases amounting almost to identity) of the language of Philo and that of Wisdom, there is one vital difference which points to a considerably earlier date for the latter. The Logos-idea is the leading feature of Philo's system, and there is in Wisdom no trace of the Philonian Logos, nor is the Divine Wisdom ever even identified with the Logos. In Philo's time the Logos-doctrine must have belonged to current Alexandrian thought ;

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 15.

² *Encycl. Bibl.*, iv. 5347.

had Philo been its originator he would have asserted it in a more polemical manner. Accordingly, time must be allowed for the development of a doctrine which Philo found ready to hand, and that length of time must have separated the composition of Wisdom from the writings of Philo. The inference is that Wisdom was composed a considerable time, perhaps a century, before Philo (who was born about B.C. 20) began to write."¹ Interesting and important as this argument is, there does not seem sufficient reason for dating our book as far back as Gregg would do; in any case the argument can only apply to the first half of the book (chapters i.-ix.); that these chapters are pre-Philonian is evident, but we should hesitate to date them earlier than about B.C. 50. The latter part of the book (x.-xix.), which is greatly inferior both in thought and diction to the earlier chapters, is more difficult to date; if we could accept Eichhorn's view that it was written during the youth of the author who added the earlier chapters in later life, we should have to assume a date considerably prior to B.C. 50 for chapters x.-xix.; but this seems inadmissible. We find it difficult, moreover, to believe that the two very differing parts of the book can have been from the same author. That chapters x.-xix. were written before the middle of the first century A.D. seems to be as much as one can say with certainty; for it is to be presumed that the book was known in its present form to St. Paul long before he wrote his epistles.

WISDOM AND THE PAULINE EPISTLES

In the notes on the text it will be seen that frequent references to the Pauline Epistles are given; to discuss the relationship between all these passages with the corresponding ones in Wisdom would be out of place here. But a word or two regarding some of them is called for in order to show that St. Paul was familiar with our book and that it was not without influence

upon his thought and writings. In some cases it may be that both St. Paul and the writer of Wisdom were merely expressing current Jewish thought, and that though there is similarity of thought or language this does not necessarily imply the influence of one upon the other nor even the knowledge of it; such a case might conceivably be Rom. v. 12, compared with Wisdom ii. 23, 24; in the latter it says—

“Because God created man for incorruption,
And in the likeness of His own proper being made
He him;
But by the envy of the devil death entered into
the world,
And they that belong to him experience it (*i. e.*
death).”

St. Paul says: “Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned.” But what is so pointed here is St. Paul’s correction of Wisdom, followed by identity of language; it was not through the envy of the devil, as the author of Wisdom says, but through the fault of man, that “sin entered into the world.” This seems so obviously a correction on the part of St. Paul that one is forced to suppose his knowledge of Wisdom. On the other hand, the two passages Wisdom iii. 8:

“They shall judge nations and have dominion over peoples,”
and 1 Cor. vi. 2: “Or know ye not that the saints shall judge the world . . . ?” reflect a common Jewish belief of the times which one finds in other books before and after.

One of the most striking instances of the direct influence of Wisdom upon St. Paul’s thought is to be seen on comparing Wisdom v. 17–20 with Eph. vi. 11–20; for though, probably enough, Isa. lix. 17 was in the mind of both, yet the similarity in the elaboration of this passage in Wisdom and Ephesians is too great to believe that both of the writers constructed it independently.

The same must be said of Wisdom xv. 7, and Rom. ix. 21-23; it will be worth while quoting these side by side:

“ For the potter laboriously kneading the soft earth,
Mouldeth each several thing for our service ;
But from the same clay doth he fashion
Both the vessels which serve to clean uses,
And those of a contrary sort, all in like manner ;
But what is to be the use of each of these
The potter is judge.”

“ Or hath not the potter a right over the clay, from the same lump to make one part a vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering vessels of wrath . . . ? ”

In speaking of this passage Goodrick says that “ the metaphor of the potter is indeed so common in the Old Testament (Isa. xxix. 16, lxiv. 8; Jer. xviii. 6, xix. 1; cp. Ps. ii. 9) that no argument can be based upon it except that both writers knew the Scriptures well, while in the passage Wisd. xv. 7 compared with Rom. ix. 21, where the strongest verbal likeness appears, Pseudo-Solomon is speaking of the folly of idolaters, whereas St. Paul is simply alluding to the difference between the classes of mankind.”¹ This last remark is not *à propos*, for the question is in respect of the metaphor of the potter and of the language in these two passages, not in respect of the *connection* in which they are found in the two passages respectively. As to the contention that this metaphor is so common in the Old Testament that no argument can be based upon it except that both writers knew the Scriptures well, it is quite beside the mark, as a perusal of the parallel passages above will at once show; the point of the whole question is, not that the

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 402.

two writers were well acquainted with certain passages in the Old Testament wherein the metaphor of the potter occurs, but the striking similarity in the use and development of the Old Testament metaphor in Wisdom xv. 7, and Rom. ix. 21-23.

Space forbids our dealing with the large number of parallels in thought and language between our book and the Pauline Epistles; we would, however, refer our readers to the excellent work of Thackeray's, *The Relation of St. Paul to Contemporary Jewish Thought* (1900), where the whole subject is admirably treated. He rightly says that the parallels "between St. Paul and Wisdom put it beyond doubt that the Apostle had at one time made a close study of the apocryphal book. It was a book which no doubt had a wide circulation at an early time, being the noblest product of the pre-Christian Judaism of Alexandria, and combining in the choicest language the broader views of Hellenism with the narrower national spirit of Judaism: a combination which would make it of special interest to the Apostle who sought to make himself all things to all men that he might by all means gain some. 'A practical man with the sharp outlook for practical needs, Paul took what was good wherever it offered itself.' The influence is rather formal than substantial. But in three, not unimportant points, the Apostle's views on idolatry, on predestination, and on eschatology, he has been to some extent affected by the matter, and not only the manner, of the Alexandrian work."¹

For the interesting subject of the influence of Greek philosophy upon the writer (or writers) of Wisdom, reference may perhaps be made by the present author to his *The Books of the Apocrypha*, pp. 77-89, where other literature is also referred to. A very useful section on Wisdom and its use by the New Testament writers will be found in Gregg's *The Wisdom of Solomon*, pp. liii-lx.

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 231. See also Sanday and Headlam's *Romans*, pp. 51, 52, 267-269.

The most important commentary on our book is that published by Grimm in the *Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zu den Aporokryphen* (1860); though written so long ago it is still indispensable for the thorough study of the Book of Wisdom. Two excellent English commentaries, which have already been referred to, are those of Gregg, in the Cambridge Bible for Schools, and Goodrick, somewhat fuller, but perhaps a little overburdened with quotations from other writers. The fine work of Bois is especially important on account of its study of the religious and philosophic conceptions in our book, *Essai sur les origines de la philosophie Judéo-Alexandrine* (1890). A full Bibliography will be found in Schürer, *Geschichte des Jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu* (4th ed.), iii. pp. 508-512.

THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

1. 1-16. **Wisdom can only be acquired by the Righteous.**

1. LOVE righteousness, ye that judge ¹ (on) the earth,
Think of the Lord with goodness of mind,
And with singleness of heart seek ye Him.²
2. For He is found of them that tempt Him not,
He is manifested unto them that distrust Him not.
3. For crooked thoughts separate from God,
And the Power, having been brought to the proof, rebuketh the foolish.³
4. For into an evil-devising soul Wisdom entereth not,
Neither doth she dwell in a body enslaved ⁴ by sin.
5. For the holy spirit of discipline fleeth (from) deceit,
And starteth away from foolish thoughts;
And is abashed ⁵ at the approach of unrighteousness,

¹ *i. e.* rulers who, just because they rule on earth, must think rightly of Him Who is their ruler in Heaven.

² Cp. *Test. XII Patr.*, Issachar iv. 1.

³ *i. e.* when a foolish man attempts to put the divine power to the test he is at once put to shame.

⁴ Cp. John viii. 34, 35: "Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin; and the bondservant abideth not in the house for ever."

⁵ The meaning of the Greek is uncertain.

6. For Wisdom is a spirit that loveth man,¹
 And holdeth not guiltless the blasphemer (who
 sinneth) with ² his lips.
 For God is witness of his innermost feelings,³
 And a true discernor ⁴ of his heart,
 And a hearer of his speech; ⁵
7. For the spirit of the Lord filleth the inhabited
 earth,
 And that which holdeth all things together hath
 knowledge of (every) voice; ⁶
8. Therefore shall no man that uttereth unrighteous
 things escape,
 Nor, in truth, shall convicting justice pass him by.
9. For a searching shall be (made) into the machina-
 tions of the ungodly,
 And the report of his words shall come unto the
 Lord
 For punishment of his lawless deeds; ⁷
10. For the ear of jealousy ⁸ heareth all things,
 And the sound of the murmurings is not hidden;
11. Be on your guard, then, (regarding) unprofitable
 murmuring,
 And refrain (your) tongue from blasphemy; ⁹
 For (even) the secret utterance goeth not forth
 unnoticed,¹⁰
 And the mouth that lieth slayeth the soul.

¹ This line somewhat breaks the connection; possibly it has got in here by mistake.

² *Lit.* "from."

³ *Lit.* "reins," *i.e.* kidneys, regarded by the Hebrews as the seat of the feelings; the heart was regarded as the seat of the understanding.

⁴ *Lit.* "overseer" (*episcopos*).

⁵ *Lit.* "tongue."

⁶ The two lines of verse 7 are complementary to the two last lines of verse 6.

⁷ The reference in verses 8 and 9 is to the evil deeds of the Jewish rulers; see verse 1.

⁸ For the "jealousy" of God cp. *Exod.* xxxiv. 14.

⁹ *Lit.* "slander"; the verse must be read with verse 10.

¹⁰ *Lit.* "empty"; God notes even the unheard evil word uttered under the breath.

12. Seek not after death by the erring way of your life,
Nor bring upon (yourselves) destruction by the works of your hands.
13. For God made not death,
Nor doth He take pleasure in the destruction of the living;¹
14. For He created all things that they might have being,
And the generative powers of the world² are healthful,
And there is not in them the poison of destruction,
Nor hath Hades royal dominion on earth,³
15. For righteousness is immortal.⁴
16. And ungodly men by their acts⁵ and words call unto him;
Deeming him a friend they consumed away (in their yearning for him),
And made a covenant with him;⁶
They are worthy to be on his side.⁷

II. 1-20. The Reasonings of the Ungodly.

1. For they said among themselves, reasoning not aright:
"Short and sorrowful is our life,
And there is no healing at the last end of man,
And none was ever known that returned from Hades.

¹ Cp. Isa. liv. 16 (Septuagint).

² R.V. marg.: "All the races of creatures in the world."

³ With this personification of Hades cp. Pluto the god of the lower regions, according to the Greeks.

⁴ In the Latin Version the following is added: "But unrighteousness is the acquisition of death." This occurs in no Greek MS.; but the verse requires a second member, and the first line of verse 16 presupposes the mention of death beforehand.

⁵ *Lit.* "hands"; i. e. handiwork.

⁶ Cp. Isa. xxviii. 15: "We have made a covenant with death."

⁷ *Lit.* "of his portion."

2. For by mere chance were we born,¹
And hereafter we shall be as though we had not
been;
For smoke is the breath in our nostrils,²
And reason is (but) a spark (kindled) by the
beating of our heart,³
3. Which being extinguished the body turneth to
ashes,
And the spirit is dispersed as thin air.
4. And our name will be forgotten in time,⁴
And no man will remember our works;
And our life will pass away like the traces of a
cloud,⁵
And be scattered as mist
When chased by the beams of the sun,
And annihilated⁶ by the heat thereof.
5. For our life is the passing of a shadow,
And there is no putting back⁷ of our latter end,
For it hath been sealed, and none reverseth it.
6. Come, therefore, and let us enjoy the good things
there are,
And let us make use of creation to the full⁸ as
in⁹ youth;¹⁰
7. With costly wines and perfumes let us fill our-
selves,
And let no flower of the spring¹¹ pass us by;

¹ Cp. the Epicuræan doctrine of the fortuitous amalgama-
tion of atoms.

² Cp. Job xxvii. 3 (Septuagint).

³ R.V. marg.: "Reason is a spark *kindled* by the beating of
our heart."

⁴ Cp. Eccles. ix. 5.

⁵ Cp. Hos. xiii. 3; Job vii. 9.

⁶ *Lit.* "weighed down"

⁷ *Lit.* "a stepping back"; the Greek word might also be
rendered "repetition," i.e. death comes once only, cp. Heb.
ix. 27.

⁸ *Lit.* "earnestly."

⁹ This rendering is on the authority of some Greek cursives.

¹⁰ Cp. Isa. xxii. 13, of which these verses are an expansion;
cp. also Eccles. xi. 9; 1 Cor. xv. 32.

¹¹ This is the reading of Cod. A and the Latin Version, most
Greek MSS. read "air."

8. Let us crown ourselves with rosebuds ere they
fade away,
And let there be no glade through which our
mirth passeth not; ¹
9. Let none of us be without his share in our proud
revelry, ²
Everywhere let us leave signs of our enjoyment,
For this is our portion, and this is our lot; ³
10. Let us oppress the righteous poor man,
Let us not spare the widow,
Nor reverence the hoary locks of the aged; ⁴
11. Let our might be our law of right, ⁵
For that which is weak is (to be) condemned ⁶
as useless.
12. And let us lie in wait for the righteous, for he is
no use to us, ⁷
And is opposed to our doings,
And reproacheth us for sins against the Law,
And denounceth us for our breaches of what is
seemly. ⁸
13. He declareth that he hath knowledge of God,
And calleth himself the child of the Lord;
14. He became to us a reproach of our ideas,

¹ This line is a free rendering of the Latin: *Nullum pratum sit quod non pertranseat luxuria nostra*. The line is wanting in Greek, but is, in all probability, genuine.

² The R.V. rendering, "proud revelry," seems justified, although the Greek word only means "pride," or the like; the context shows that the idea of enjoyment is implied. These hedonists are represented as glorying in their life of pleasure and debauch, which they claim as their right; they have consideration for none, and regard with supercilious contempt all who differ from them.

³ Cp. Eccles. iii. 22.

⁴ With verses 6-10 cp. Eccles. ix. 7-9.

⁵ *Lit.* "righteousness"; but the context shows that the sense of the passage is as above.

⁶ *Lit.* "convicted."

⁷ This line is quoted from the Septuagint of Isa. iii. 10, though there the word "bind" occurs in place of "lie in wait."

⁸ *Lit.* "sins of our discipline." The reference, judging from the parallel "sins against the Law," must be to the unwritten law handed down by tradition.

- It is an annoyance¹ to us even to look upon
(such an one);
15. For his manner of life is unlike others,
And his ways are strange.
16. As base metal are we accounted by him,
And he avoideth our ways as something unclean;
He calleth happy the last end of just men,
And boasteth that God is (his) Father.
17. Let us see if his words be true,
And let us test him at his last hour.²
18. For if the righteous man be God's son, He will
uphold him,³
And will deliver him from the hand of his
adversaries.⁴
19. With insult and torture let us try him,
That we may take knowledge of his gentleness,⁵
And that we may judge of his endurance in
suffering.⁶
20. To a shameful death let us condemn him,
For there shall be a visitation of him in accordance with his words."⁷

II. 21-24. The Folly of these Reasonings.

21. Thus⁸ they reasoned, and they were led astray;
For their malice blinded them,
22. And they knew not the mysteries of God,⁹

¹ *Lit.* "It is grievous."

² *Lit.* "Let us make trial of the things (that will come to pass) in his going forth."

³ Cp. Ps. xxii. 9 (*Hebr.*).

⁴ By "his adversaries" are meant those who are speaking these words.

⁵ Cp. Phil. iv. 5.

⁶ *Lit.* "endurance of evil."

⁷ It is difficult to give a good rendering of the Greek of this line without paraphrasing; what it means is: "Then we shall see what truth there is in his words."

⁸ *Lit.* "These things."

⁹ Cod. B reads: "his mysteries," which would refer to the righteous man spoken of in verses 18 ff. But the better attested reading is that given above, the reference being to what is said in what follows, and especially to what is said about the lot of the righteous hereafter in iii. 1 ff.

Neither hoped they for the reward of holiness,
Nor did they discern¹ the prize of blameless
souls.

23. Because God created man for incorruption,
And in the likeness of His own proper being²
made He him;
24. But by the envy of the devil death entered into
the world,³
And they that belong to him experience it.⁴

III. 1-9. The Lot of the Righteous Hereafter.

1. But the souls of the righteous are in the hands
of God,⁵

¹ *Lit.* "judge."

² Cp. Gen 1 26. Some cursives read "everlastingness," and this is found in many patristic writings.

³ Cp. Rom. v. 12-14; 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22. "The transmitted effects of Adam's fall, it must be noted, are not mentioned in the narrative of Genesis. Misery and death are there the sentence pronounced upon Adam and Eve alone. And this transmission does not meet us until we come down to the apocryphal books written shortly before or about the time of St. Paul. The connection of Adam's sin with the introduction of death is that which is most widely attested. . . . We first meet with it in Wisdom ii. 23 f.; we notice here the occurrence of St. Paul's phrase, 'death (regarded as a tyrannical power) entered into the world,' which occurs also in Rabbinical writings (*Erubin* 18b, 'When Adam saw that through him death entered into the world he sat a hundred and thirty years fasting, separated from his wife'), and appears therefore to have been an established phrase in this connection, taken over by the Apostle. Again, we notice that although the mortality of the human race is spoken of as due to Adam's sin (or the devil's envy), yet, just as in St. Paul, there is the implication that it is due also to the sins of the individual, who ranges himself on the side of Satan" (Thackeray, *The Relation of St. Paul to Contemporary Jewish Thought*, pp. 31 f., 1900).

⁴ "It," i. e. death; contrasted with the life hereafter experienced by the righteous, as described in iii. 2 ff.; see next footnote.

⁵ For the teaching of our book on the immortality of the soul see, besides this passage, i. 15, ii. 23, iv. 7, v. 15. There is no doctrine of the resurrection of the body; the souls of the righteous are immortal, and immediately after death they are

- And, of a truth,¹ no torment shall touch them.
2. In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died;
And their departure was accounted a misfortune,
 3. And their going² from us (their) destruction;
But they are in peace.³
 4. For even if in the sight of men they were punished,⁴
(Yet) is their hope full of immortality;
 5. And having been chastened (but) a little, they
shall be greatly blessed;
For God tried them,
And found them worthy of Himself.
 6. As gold in the furnace did He prove them,
And as a whole burnt-offering He accepted them.
 7. And in the time of their visitation⁵ they shall
shine forth,
And as sparks among stubble⁶ shall they run to
and fro.⁷
 8. They shall judge nations, and have dominion
over peoples,
And the Lord shall reign over them for ever.⁸

united with God. The righteous, therefore, never die; they only seem to do so in the eyes of the undiscerning. For St. Paul's teaching on immortality see (besides 1 Cor. xv.) 2 Cor. i. 9, 10, iv. 11-14, v. 10; Phil. iii. 10, 11, see also 1 Tim. vi. 12, 2 Tim. iv. 1, 8; Tit. ii. 13. A comparison of these passages shows that St. Paul utilized the language of our book, but developed its teaching in the light of fuller revelation.

¹ The words "of a truth" are intended to express the emphatic negative of the original.

² Cp. Eccles. xii. 5.

³ Cp. 1 Enoch cii. 10.

⁴ *Lit.* "they shall have been punished." As Goodrick points out, the R V. "entirely misses the grammatical point in *κολασθῶσιν*, which plainly refers back these 'punishments' to the time of mortal life; the education or chastening of God's people by trouble."

⁵ As the whole of this passage deals with the Hereafter the "visitation" must refer to the Judgement.

⁶ For the metaphor cp. Joel ii. 5.

⁷ With the whole verse cp. 1 Enoch civ. 2: "Ye shall shine as the lights of heaven, ye shall shine and ye shall be seen . . ."

⁸ Cp. Ps. x. 16; 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3

9. They that trust in Him shall understand truth,
And the faithful shall abide in Him in love;
For grace and mercy are for His elect,
And He will graciously visit His holy ones.¹

III. 10—IV. 6. **The Punishment of the Ungodly.**

10. But the ungodly shall receive punishment according as they reasoned,²
Which were heedless of the right, revolting from the Lord;
11. For he that setteth at nought wisdom and instruction is miserable.³
And vain is their hope, and useless their labours,
And unprofitable are their works.
12. Their wives are foolish,
And evil are their children;
Accursed is their generation.⁴
13. For blessed is the barren that is undefiled,
That hath not known wedlock in transgression,⁵
She shall have fruit in the examination⁶ of souls;
14. And (blessed) is the eunuch that hath not wrought unlawfulness with his hand,
Nor imagined evil things against the Lord;
For to him shall be given the special⁷ grace of faith,

¹ This line does not occur in Cod. B, but Codd. SA and all the Versions, excepting the Latin, have it.

² *i. e.* as detailed in ii. 1-5.

³ This line is an inaccurate quotation from Prov i. 7; it would have been better if the author had kept to the plural number of the original (in the Hebrew as well as in the Septuagint).

⁴ It is uncertain whether this refers to "begetting," or "those begotten," *i. e.* the offspring, the Greek word can mean either; probably the former is the meaning here; for the latter cp. Eccclus. xli. 5.

⁵ This is Goodrick's rendering of the line; see his excellent comments on verses 12-14.

⁶ "The word 'examination' is used rather in a modern sense, 'inspection' with a view to approbation or condemnation" (Goodrick).

⁷ *Lit.* "chosen."

- And a portion in the Temple of the Lord of much delight.¹
15. For the fruit of good labours is glorious,
And the root of understanding unerring.
16. But children of adulterers shall not come to maturity,
And the seed of unlawful wedlock shall vanish away.²
17. Even though they be long-lived, they shall be held of no account,
And unhonoured shall their old age be at the last.
18. And if they die quickly they have no hope,³
Nor in the day of decision⁴ (shall they have) consolation;
19. For grievous (is) the end⁵ of an unrighteous generation.⁶
- IV. 1. Better (than this is) childlessness with virtue,⁷
For immortality is in the remembrance of her,⁸
Since both with God and with men she is recognized.
2. When she is present (men) imitate her,
And long after her when absent;
And she marcheth for ever⁹ crowned in triumph,
Having conquered in the struggle for prizes that are undefiled.¹⁰
3. But the multiplying brood of the ungodly¹¹ will not profit (them).
And from (its) bastard slips it will not strike deep root,
Nor establish a firm foundation;

¹ Cp. Isa. lvi. 5; Eccles. xlv. 2.

² Cp. Isa. lvii. 3; Eccles. xxiii. 24-26.

³ *i. e.* if they die young there is no hope of their leaving a posterity.

⁴ *i. e.* the day of Judgement. ⁵ Greek " (are) the ends "

⁶ Cp. Exod. xx. 5, xxxiv. 7; Deut. v. 9.

⁷ Cp. Eccles. xvi. 4. ⁸ *i. e.* of virtue.

⁹ Greek: " in the age. "

¹⁰ As contrasted with transient earthly rewards.

¹¹ As contrasted with the childlessness of the godly (verse 1).

4. For even though it shoot up its ¹ branches for a time,
Standing unstably it will be shaken by the wind,
And will be rooted up by the force of the winds;
5. Its branches will be broken off before they come to maturity,²
And useless will be their fruit, unripe for food,
And serviceable for nought.
6. For children born of unlawful wedlock ³
Are witnesses of wickedness against their parents
in the (final) judgement.⁴

IV. 7-14b. **The Blessedness of the Righteous Man, though he die prematurely.**

7. But the righteous man, though he die before his time, shall be at rest,—
8. For honourable old age is not (reckoned) by length of time,
Nor is it measured by the number of years;
9. But understanding is grey hairs unto men,
And an unspotted manner of life is ripe old age;—⁵
10. Being well-pleasing unto God he was beloved,⁶

¹ *Lit.* "in."

² Cp. Ecclus. xxiii. 25.

"Her children shall not spread out their roots,
And her branches shall bear no fruit."

Spoken of in reference to the adulteress.

³ The reference is to children of mixed marriages.

⁴ Cp. iii. 18. "The language is, no doubt, strong, but from the days of Hosea onwards we find Israel's connection with the heathen and their religions compared to 'adultery' and 'whoredom'." (Goodrick).

⁵ Cp. Isa. lxxv. 20, Ps. lxxxiv. 10.

⁶ Obviously Enoch is here meant; in Ecclus. xlv. 16 (Greek) almost the identical words are used in reference to Enoch (cp. also the Septuagint of Gen v. 24). There was no need to mention him by name, as the accepted fact of his translation was so well known (to the Jews of the Dispersion as well as those of Palestine). Whenever Elijah's translation is referred to in Jewish Literature further details are given (see e. g. Ecclus. xlviii. 9). The reference in the present con-

- And living among sinners he was translated ;
 11. He was caught away lest wickedness should
 change his understanding.¹
 Or guile deceive his soul ;—
 12. For the fascination of badness falsifieth ² things
 that are good,
 And the giddy whirl³ of desire perverteth the
 guileless mind ;—
 13. (And) being perfected in a brief space, he lived ⁴
 for long ages ;⁵
 14. For well-pleasing unto the Lord was his soul,
 Therefore hastened He (it) ⁶ from the midst of
 wickedness.

IV. 14c-20. **The Ungodly do not understand
 these things ; Retribution shall come upon
 them.**

- 14c. But (as for) the peoples,⁷ seeing and under-
 standing not,
 Nor laying such-like thing to heart (viz.),
 15. That grace and mercy are with His chosen,
 And (that) His visitation is with His holy ones,—⁸
 16. But the righteous man shall judge the ungodly
 that are living,

nection to Enoch is quite natural, for he was a " perfect " man, and the many legends about him (cp. the Enoch Literature) had made his name very familiar.

¹ *i. e.* pervert his mental attitude.

² *Lit.* " maketh dark " ; by being fascinated by evil a man comes to take a wrong estimate of things, he loses the faculty of discerning clearly between good and evil.

³ This rendering of the R.V. seems to come as near as possible to the Greek word coined by the author.

⁴ *Lit.* " he fulfilled," a Hebrew mode of expression occurring frequently in the O.T.

⁵ *Lit.* " times."

⁶ *i. e.* his soul.

⁷ Cod. A reads ἄλλοι, which may well be a corruption of ἀνομοι (" lawless "), a more appropriate word here.

⁸ Visitation used in the sense of visiting with mercy here cp. iii. 7 ; for the more usual sense see ii. 20.

- And quickly perfected youth (shall condemn) the old age of the unrighteous (man) full of years;—¹
17. For they ² shall see the end of the wise man,
And shall not understand what (the Lord) purposed concerning him,
Nor for what end the Lord set him in safety;
18. They shall see it and account it as nothing,³
And them shall the Lord laugh to scorn.⁴
19. And after this they shall become a dishonoured carcase,
And for a mockery among the dead for ever.⁵
For He shall dash them speechless to the ground,
And shall shake (them) from their foundations; ⁶
And they shall be utterly ⁷ desolated,
And shall be in torment,
And their memory shall perish.
20. And they shall come, at the reckoning up of their sins, in coward fear,
And their lawless deeds shall convict them to their face.⁸

¹ Verse 16 must either be regarded as in parenthesis, or, more likely, it is an interpolation. With the words: "the righteous shall judge the ungodly that are living," cp. Matt. xii. 41: "The men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgement with this generation, and shall condemn it," and also Matt. xix. 28: "Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

² *i. e.* "the peoples" (or "the lawless") in verse 14*c*, if verse 16 be regarded as an interpolation.

³ This rendering expresses the meaning of the Greek rather more clearly than the indefinite "they shall despise" of the R.V.

⁴ Cp. Ps. ii. 4.

⁵ Cp. for the idea Isa. xiv. 9-19. The idea of an unburied body was horrible to the Jew; that it should be a mockery among the departed is a strange thought, and probably occurs here for the first time in Jewish Literature.

⁶ Cp. for the idea Ps. ix. 6. ⁷ *Lit.* "to the last end."

⁸ Most commentators appear to take this verse as referring to a subjective judgement at the bar of the sinner's own conscience; it seems strange that the obvious meaning of the words should have been so misunderstood; cp. Enoch lxxxi. 4, xcvi. 8, civ. 7, *Test. XII Patr.*, Issach. xii. 5, Rom. ii. 15, 16.

V. 1-14. The Remorse of the Wicked at the Judgement.

1. Then shall the righteous stand forth with much boldness
Before the face of them that afflicted him,
And of them that regarded his troubles as of no account.
2. When they see (him) ¹ they will be troubled with terrible fear,
And will be amazed at the unexpectedness of his ¹ deliverance;
3. Repenting ² they will say to ³ themselves :
—Yea, through distress of spirit will they groan—
“This is he whom we aforetime had in derision,”⁴
4. And (made) a byword of reproach, 4. fools (that we were);
His manner of life we accounted mad,⁵
And his end without honour;
5. How ⁶ was he then reckoned among the sons of God,
And his portion among the saints? ⁷
6. After all then ⁸ we went astray from the path of truth,
And the light of righteousness shone not upon us,
And the sun rose not upon us!

¹ *i. e.* the righteous man.

² Not to be taken in a religious sense, but in that of remorsefully changing their mind.

³ *Lit.* “among.”

⁴ *Lit.* “for laughter.”

⁵ *Lit.* “madness.”

⁶ Perhaps rather exclamatory than interrogative.

⁷ Gregg, in pointing out the word-play in the Greek between “reckoned” and “accounted” (verse 4), well remarks: “Just as there was a register of the citizens of the theocratic community, entitling those enrolled to temporal blessings (Ps. lxxix. 28), so an analogous register is pictured as existing in the eternal world. This conversation among the dead may have been suggested by Isa. xiv.”

⁸ This is the force of *ἀπα* here.

7. We took our fill ¹ of the paths of lawlessness and destruction,
And we journeyed through trackless deserts,
But the way of the Lord we knew not.
8. What did our pride profit us?
And what help did riches and ² boasting ³ bring us?
9. All those things passed away like a shadow,
And like a messenger ⁴ that runneth past;
10. Like a ship passing through the billowy water,⁵
Which, having sped, no trace (thereof) is found,
Nor track of its keel in the waves;
11. Or as a bird flying through the air,
No sign of its course is found;
But the light wind, lashed by the stroke of her wings,
And pierced by the force of her flight,
Is traversed by the movement of (her) wings,⁶
And then ⁷ no sign of her passage is found therein;
12. Or as an arrow shot at a mark,
The air being cleft straightway closeth up into itself,
So that its path is not known.
13. So, too, we being born, ceased to be,⁸
And of virtue we had no sign to show,
And in our wickedness we were utterly consumed.
14. For the hope of the ungodly man is as chaff
swept away by the wind,
And as thin hoar-frost ⁹ scattered by the tempest;
And as smoke dispersed by the wind,

¹ Cp. Prov. xiv. 14.

² *Lit.* "with."

³ Cp. James iv. 16 (Greek).

⁴ *Lit.* "message," but "messenger" is evidently meant, for it is this latter, not the message, that "runneth past"

⁵ For the thought cp. Prov. xxx. 19.

⁶ *Lit.* "(her) wings moving."

⁷ *Lit.* "after this."

⁸ *Lit.* "failed."

⁹ This is the best-attested reading; a few MSS. read "foam," and some read "spider"; either of these would give better sense than "hoar-frost," which can hardly be right, for hoar-frost cannot be said to be scattered by the tempest; if "spider" be read cp. Job viii. 14 (Septuagint).

And it passeth as the remembrance of a guest
who tarrieth but a day."

**V. 15-23. The Reward of the Righteous, and
the Fate of the Ungodly.**

15. But the righteous shall live for ever,
And in the Lord ¹ is their reward,
And the care of them is with the Most High.²
16. Therefore shall they receive a glorious kingdom,³
And a diadem of beauty from the hand of the
Lord,
For with His right hand shall He cover them,
And with His arm shall He shield them.
17. He shall take His jealousy ⁴ as complete armour,⁵
And make the Creation His weapon for the
repulse of (His) enemies;⁶
18. He shall put on righteousness as a breastplate,
And array Himself with judgement unfeigned as
with a helmet;
19. He shall take holiness as an invincible shield,
20. And shall sharpen stern wrath as a sword,
And with Him shall the world go forth to fight
against the madmen.
21. Well-aimed shafts of lightning shall go forth,
And as from a well-drawn ⁷ bow from the clouds
shall they reach ⁸ their mark;⁹

¹ *i. e.* in His keeping; cp. Is. lxii. 11. ² Cp. Ps. xl. 17.

³ The usual meaning of the word is "palace," but here it evidently has the sense of "kingdom," cp. 1. 14. R.V. renders more literally, "a crown of royal dignity," which is the symbol of kingship.

⁴ "' Jealousy ' for ζήλος is an inadequate word; the meaning is God's zeal for the interests of His people . . . but 'zeal' is by usage employed only of men, and therefore cannot be here used" (Goodrick), cp. Joel ii. 18.

⁵ With verses 17-20 cp. Isa. lix. 16-18 and Eph. vi. 11-17, and the *Introduction*, pp. xix. ff.

⁶ For illustrations of this thought cp. the plagues of Egypt, and Judges v. 20; Amos ix. 5, 6.

⁷ *Lit.* "well-curved."

Lit. "leap to."

⁹ With this verse cp. 2 Sam. xxii. 15 (= Ps. xviii. 15); Ps. cxliv, 6, Hab. iii. 11.

22. And (as) from a sling hailstones full of wrath
shall be hurled;
The water of the sea shall rage against them,
And the rivers shall relentlessly o'erwhelm them;
23. A mighty wind shall encounter them,
And as a tempest shall it winnow them away;
And lawlessness shall make desolate the whole
land,
And evil-doing shall overthrow the thrones of
the mighty.¹

VI. I-II. An Exhortation to Rulers.²

1. Hear, therefore, O kings, and understand,
Learn, O ye judges of the uttermost parts of the
earth;
2. Give ear, O ye that rule over multitudes,
And hold proud dominion³ over many nations.⁴
3. For your power was given you from the Lord,
And your sovereignty from the Most High,⁵
Who shall search out your works, and scrutinize
your counsels?
4. For though ye were officers of His Kingdom⁵ ye
judged not rightly,
Neither kept ye the Law,⁶

¹ "The two last lines of the chapter stand altogether apart in sense and style from those preceding. They clunch with a somewhat obvious aphorism all the eloquent denunciation which has gone before, and bring the reader back with some suddenness from cosmic and timeless flights to concrete moralizings. They serve the purpose, however, of a connecting-link between the three comparisons which have occupied chapters ii-v. and chapter vi. i-ii, which is a reaffirmation of chapter i., more directly and forcibly pointed in view of the considerations brought forward" (Gregg).

² The Latin Version has the following appropriate title to this section: "Melior est sapientia quam vires, et vir prudens quam fortis."

³ *Lit.* "ye that boast."

⁴ *Lit.* "multitudes of nations"

⁵ Cp. Eccus. x. 4a; Rom. xiii. 1; 1 Pet. ii. 14.

⁶ This shows that the words of this section are addressed to Jewish rulers.

- Nor did ye walk¹ according to the counsel of God.
5. Terribly and swiftly shall He come upon you,
For stern judgement befalleth them that are in high place.
 6. For the man that is of low estate may be forgiven in mercy,
But the mighty shall be mightily tested.
 7. For the Lord of all will not have respect for any man's person,²
Neither will He reverence greatness;
For He Himself made small and great,
And alike He taketh thought for all;
 8. But upon the mighty shall searching³ scrutiny come.
 9. For you, therefore, O rulers, are my words,
That ye may learn wisdom and not fall away.
 10. For they that holily observe holy things shall be made holy,
And they that are taught them shall find a defence.
 11. Earnestly desire, therefore, my words,
Yearn for them, and ye shall be taught⁴

VI. 12-20. He that searcheth for Wisdom shall find her.

12. Brilliant and unfading is Wisdom,
And easily is she beheld of them that love her;
And she is found of them that seek her.⁵

¹ Cp. Ps. i. 1: "... walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly."

² This is rather a paraphrase than a translation, it is *lit.*: "For the Lord of all will not shrink from a face (of man)," cp. Deut. i. 17; Acts x. 34.

³ *Lit.* "strong."

⁴ The Greek word includes the idea of moral discipline as well as intellectual learning.

⁵ This line is omitted in the text of Cod. B, though added in the margin by a later hand; it is found in the other great uncials as well as in the Latin and Syriac Versions; cp. Prov. viii. 17. On the personification of Wisdom in the Wisdom Literature see the first section of the *Introduction*.

13. She forestalleth them that desire (her), being made known beforehand.
14. He that riseth early for her shall not (have to) toil,
For he shall find her sitting at his gates.
15. For to have her in mind is perfectness of understanding,
And he that waketh for her will quickly be free from care.
16. For she herself goeth about seeking them that are worthy of her,¹
And in their paths ² appeareth graciously unto them,
And in every purpose she meeteth them.
17. For the true ³ beginning of her is the desire for instruction,
18. And the care for instruction is love (for her),
And love (for her) is the observance of her laws,
And the heeding of (her) laws is the assurance of incorruption,⁴
19. And incorruption is the means of coming near to God;⁵
20. Thus, the desire for Wisdom leadeth unto a kingdom.⁶

VI. 21-25. The Writer's Promise to declare the Nature and Origin of Wisdom.

21. If, therefore, ye delight in thrones and sceptres,
ye rulers of the peoples,
Honour Wisdom, that ye may reign for ever.

¹ Cp. Prov. i. 20, 21.

² Cp. Prov. viii. 2.

³ *Lit.* "truest."

⁴ *i. e.* immortality.

⁵ *Lit.* "maketh to be near to God."

⁶ Verses 17-20 present an example of "the logical figure called Sorites, or Chain-inference, of which the Stoics were very fond (Zeller, *Stoics*, p. note 16, note)," Holmes in Charles' *Apocr. and Pseud. of the O.T.*, I. 544. By "kingdom" in this verse is, of course, not meant the kingdom of heaven, but dominion, *i. e.* the ascendancy over the mind of men possessed by one whose desire for Wisdom has enabled him to attain her.

22. But what Wisdom is,¹ and how she came into being, I will declare,
 And I will not hide mysteries from you;
 But I will trace her out from the beginning of (her) being,²
 And will place in clear light the knowledge of her;
 And I will assuredly³ not pass by the truth;
 23. Nor, indeed, will I have aught to do with⁴
 morbid⁵ envy,
 For this hath no fellowship with Wisdom.
 24. But the multitude of wise men is the salvation⁶
 of the world,
 And a prudent king is the stay of his people.⁷
 25. Wherefore be instructed by my words, and ye
 shall be profited.

VII. 1-14. **The Writer impersonates Solomon.
 How he attained to Wisdom.**

- I. I am,⁸ in truth, a mortal like all (of you),
 And the offspring of the first-formed, earth-born
 (man);⁹
 And in the womb of a mother was I moulded
 (into) flesh

¹ See vii. 22-27.

² Cp. Prov. viii. 24; Eccclus. i. 4, xxiv. 9.

³ This word is inserted in order to express the emphatic double negative of the Greek.

⁴ *Lit.* "will I take with me on my way."

⁵ *Lit.* "pining," or "wasting away." In this and in the previous verse there is "a reference to the sophists, or paid teachers, who had recourse to obscurantism in order to safeguard their prospective profits" (Gregg, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, p. 63).

⁶ *i. e.* well-being.

⁷ Goodrick aptly quotes Plato, *Republic*, v. 473c: "Unless philosophers become kings, or kings philosophers, there will never be rest from evils in the cities." Voltaire adds to this, in his *Le Siècle de Louis XIV*: "Il est très vrai de dire que les rois en sont plus heureux quand il y a beaucoup de leurs sujets philosophes."

⁸ The writer here impersonates Solomon, the wise king; this continues to the end of chapter ix.

⁹ The reference is to Adam.

2. Within the space of ten months,¹ compact with blood,
By the seed of man and the pleasure that cometh with wedlock.²
3. And I, moreover, being born, drew in the common air,
And came³ upon the earth just like other men,⁴
Wailing out my first cry just like all (the rest).
4. In swaddling-clothes was I nursed and with (manifold) cares.
5. For no king had a beginning of being other (than this);
6. For there is one entrance into life for all, and the same exit.⁵
7. Wherefore⁶ I prayed, and understanding was given unto me;
I besought, and a spirit of wisdom came unto me.⁷
8. I preferred her to sceptres and thrones,
And wealth I accounted nought in comparison with her;
9. Nor would I liken to her a priceless gem,⁸
For all gold in her sight is but a little sand,
And silver is accounted clay before her.
10. I loved her more than health and comeliness,
And chose to have her rather than light,
For undimmed⁹ is the radiance (which cometh forth) from her.
11. And there came unto me with her all good things together,
And immeasurable¹⁰ wealth is in her hands;

¹ The reference is to lunar months which are practically equivalent to nine calendar months.

² *Lit.* "sleep."

³ *Lit.* "fell," cp. Isa. xxvi. 18 (Hebrew); for the explanation see Gen. xxx. 3.

⁴ *Lit.* "being in like case (with other men)."

⁵ Cp. Job i. 21; Eccles iii. 20.

⁶ Because he was but an ordinary man.

⁷ Cp. 1 Kings iii. 6-15.

⁸ Cp. Job xxviii. 18; Prov. iii. 14, 15, viii. 10, 11.

⁹ *Lit.* "sleepless."

¹⁰ *Lit.* "innumerable."

12. And I rejoiced over all, for Wisdom leadeth them;
 But I knew her not to be the first origin¹ of these.
13. Whole-heartedly² I learned, ungrudgingly I give,
 Her riches I do not hide away.
14. For an unfailing treasure is she for men,
 They that make use of her win³ the friendship of God,⁴
 Being commended through the gifts of (her) training.

VII. 15-22a. **God alone is the Giver of Wisdom.**

15. But to me may God grant to speak according to (His) mind,
 And to conceive worthy thoughts⁵ concerning the things that have been given (unto me);⁶
 For He is the guide even of Wisdom,
 And the director of the wise.
16. For in His hand are both we and our words,
 And all understanding and knowledge of crafts.
17. For He Himself gave me unerring knowledge of existing things,
 To know the constitution of the world and the working of the elements,⁷
18. The beginning and end and middle of times,
 The alternations of the solstices and the changes of seasons,
19. The circuits of the years and the positions of the stars,

¹ Cod A reads: "mother."

² Lit "without guile."

³ Lit. "prepare for themselves."

⁴ For the thought of friendship of God cp. Isa. xli. 8; John xv. 14.

⁵ Lit. "to conceive thoughts worthily."

⁶ Codd. AN read: "that have been spoken (by me)." If this reading is correct the reference must be to what has been said in the preceding verses.

⁷ Cp. xiii. 2, 3, where the elements are said to be regarded by the heathen as the gods that rule the world.

20. The natures of living creatures and the ragings ¹
of wild beasts,
The powers of spirits ² and the reasonings of men,
The diversities of plants and the virtues of roots.
21. Both things hidden and things manifest I learned
(to understand);
22a. For she that is the artificer ³ of all, (namely)
Wisdom, taught me.

VII. 22b—VIII. 1. The Nature of Wisdom.

- 22b. For there is in her ⁴ a spirit of understanding,
holy,⁵
Sole-born, manifold, subtil,
Mobile, lucid, unpolluted,
Clear, inviolable, loving goodness, keen,
23. Unhindered, beneficent, 23. Loving toward
man,
Steadfast, sure, free from care,⁶
All-powerful, all-surveying,
And penetrating through all spirits ⁷
That are quick of understanding, pure, and
most subtil.

¹ *i. e.* the nature of wild beasts; cp. 1 Kings iv. 33, and Proverbs *passim*.

² Cp. Josephus, *Antiq.* VIII. ii. 5.

³ Cp. Prov. viii. 30. The word does not imply the idea of creating; God alone is the Creator, but He uses Wisdom to carry out His will in the created world.

⁴ Cod. A reads: "For she is a spirit"; as Goodrick remarks: "A good deal depends upon the reading here. If the variant be accepted we have something very like an identification of Wisdom with the Holy Spirit, which was favoured by the Fathers, who did not understand that this was to ascribe the doctrine of the Holy Ghost to an Alexandrian origin, a mistake of which full use has been made in modern times. It is likely that the variant was due to some supporters of this identification" (*Op. cit.*, p. 194).

⁵ With verses 22 ff. cp. St. Paul's language about the influence of the Spirit (1 Cor. ii. 6-16); see also Wisd. ix. 6,

9-17.

⁶ Cp. vi. 15.

⁷ The reference here is to the spirits of men.

24. For Wisdom is more mobile than any motion,
Yea, she pervadeth and penetrateth all things
by reason of her pureness.
25. For she is a vapour ¹ of the power of God,
And a clear effluence of the glory of the
Almighty; ²
Therefore nothing defiled findeth entrance into
her.
26. For she is a reflection ³ from (the) everlasting
light,
And an unspotted mirror of the working of
God,
And the image of His goodness.
27. Though being (but) one she can do all things,
And (though) abiding within herself she renew-
eth all things,
And from generation to generation passing into
holy souls,
She maketh men friends of God ⁴ and prophets. ⁵
28. For nothing doth God love save him that dwelleth
with Wisdom.
29. For she is more beautiful than the sun,
And above every constellation of the stars ⁶ (in
beauty),
Being compared with light she is found superior ⁷;
30. For night followeth this, ⁸

¹ Cp. Eccus. xxiv. 3: "I came forth from the mouth of the Most High, and as a mist I covered the earth"; these words are put into the mouth of Wisdom.

² Cp. the Jewish conception of the *Shekhinah*.

³ Cp. Heb. i. 3.

⁴ Cp. verse 14.

⁵ *i. e.* inspired men.

⁶ Cp. verse 19 (Greek).

⁷ This, the secondary meaning of the Greek word, is obviously the meaning here; in its primary sense the word means "anterior," and according to Jewish teaching Wisdom was created before the beginning of the world, and therefore before the sun and the stars; but as the context shows, this is not the thought here.

⁸ *i. e.* light. Wisdom's light is never obscured by anything corresponding to the darkness which succeeds the light of day. For the thought of light and darkness corresponding respectively to good and evil, cp. 1 John i. 5, etc.

Whereas evil prevaieth not over Wisdom,
 VIII. 1. But reacheth from end to end (of the earth)
 mightily,
 And ordereth all things fitly.

VIII. 2-21. **Solomon's Praise of Wisdom,
 his Bride.**

2. Her I loved and sought diligently from my youth,¹
 Yea, I sought (her) to lead her home as my bride,²
 And I became enamoured³ of her beauty.
3. She glorifieth her noble origin in that it is given her to live with God,
 And the Lord of all things loved her.
4. For she is an initiate into the knowledge of God,
 And a chooser of His works.⁴
5. But if wealth be a desirable possession in life,
 What is richer than Wisdom which worketh all things?⁵
6. And if understanding worketh,
 Who of those that exist is a greater worker than she?⁶
7. And if a man loveth righteousness,
 Her labours are virtues;⁷
 For she teacheth self-control and prudence,
 Righteousness and manliness.⁸

¹ Cp. Eccus. vi. 18, li. 13.

² *Lit.* "to lead her as a bride unto myself"; cp. Eccus. xv. 2, "And as a youthful wife will she (*i. e.* Wisdom) receive him."

³ *Lit.* "a lover."

⁴ Cp. Prov. viii. 22-30.

⁵ Cp. Prov. viii. 18.

⁶ The Greek text of this verse is evidently corrupt. "Understanding" is equivalent to Wisdom on the more purely intellectual side.

⁷ *i. e.* If a man desires to attain to righteousness the way thereto is to acquire Wisdom, for the very labours required in attaining her are the virtues of self-control, etc.

⁸ The classification of these four cardinal virtues is due to Plato, and he was followed in this by the Stoics. The twofold

Than which nothing in life is more profitable for men.

8. And if a man longeth also for much experience,¹
She knoweth the things of old, and divineth² the things to come;
She understandeth subtilties of arguments,³ and the interpretations of dark sayings;⁴
Signs and wonders doth she foresee,
And the issues of seasons and times.⁵
9. I determined therefore to take her unto me to live with me,
Knowing that she will be to me a counsellor of what is good,⁶
And a comfort in cares and grief.
10. Through her I shall have praise⁷ among multitudes,⁸
And honour with elders, though young.
11. Sharp in judgement shall I be found,
And in the sight of the mighty shall I be admired.⁹
12. When I am silent they will wait for me, when I speak they will give heed to me,

occurrence of the word "righteousness" in this verse must be explained by assuming its first mention to refer to right living in the sight of God, while the second mention of it refers to right dealing between man and man; the former refers to righteousness in its widest and fullest meaning, the latter to the more restricted sense of justice.

¹ "Wisdom possesses that mental vigour which places all past experience at the service of the constructive imagination, and enables her to anticipate the future" (Gregg).

² *Lit.* "conjectureth"; another reading is: "She knoweth . . . and (how) to divine the things to come."

³ Cp. Prov. i. 3 (Septuagint), Eccus. xxxix. 2; the Greek word for "subtilties" means *lit.* "twisting."

⁴ Cp. Prov. i. 6.

⁵ Cp. Dan. iv. 34 (Septuagint).

⁶ *Lit.* "of good things"; there is much to be said for Goodrick's rendering "in prosperity" in view of the next line.

⁷ *Lit.* "glory."

⁸ *i. e.* assemblies of the people.

⁹ Cp. 1 Kings iv. 34, v. 7, x. 5-9.

- And when I continue to speak
 They will lay their hand upon their mouth.¹
13. Through her I shall have immortality,²
 And an eternal memorial shall I leave to those
 (who come) after me.
14. I shall govern peoples, and nations shall be subject
 to me ;
15. Dreaded rulers ³ hearing of me will fear me,
 In the assembly I shall appear good, and in battle
 courageous.
16. When I enter my house I shall find rest with her,
 For converse with her hath no bitterness,
 Nor life with her pain,
 But gladness and joy.
17. These things considering within myself,
 And pondering (them) in my heart,
 That there is immortality in kinship ⁴ with
 Wisdom,
18. And in friendship with her pure delight,
 And in the labours of her hands unceasing wealth,
 And strenuous communing with her is under-
 standing,
 And great renown (there is) in the participation
 of her words,—
 I went about seeking how to take her unto
 myself.
19. Now I was a goodly child,
 And a good soul fell to my lot ;
20. Nay rather, being good, I came into a body
 undefiled.⁵
21. But knowing that I should not otherwise obtain
 (Wisdom) unless God gave her,⁶

¹ Cp. Job xxix. 21, 22 with the whole verse.

² *i. e.* as "an eternal memorial," and, as the words of the following verses show, undying fame.

³ Cp. 1 Kings x. 23-25.

⁴ Cp. Prov. vii. 4, where Wisdom is spoken of as a sister.

⁵ With this teaching of the pre-existence of the soul—greatly developed in later Jewish teaching—cp. *Assumption of Moses* i. 14.

⁶ Cp. Prov. ii. 6.

—And that this was (a matter) of understanding,
 (viz.) to know of whom this gift (cometh),—
 I pleaded with the Lord and made supplication
 to Him,
 And from my whole heart spoke (thus) :

IX. I-II. Solomon's Prayer.

1. O God of the fathers, and Lord of mercy,¹
 Who madest all things by ² Thy word,³
2. And by Thy wisdom didst form man,
 That he should dominion over all creatures
 made by Thee,⁴
3. And rule the world in holiness and righteousness,
 And execute judgement in uprightness of soul,—
4. Give to me the Wisdom that sitteth by Thee
 upon Thy throne,⁵
 And reject me not from among Thy servants.
5. For I am Thy bond-servant and the son of Thine
 handmaid,⁶
 A man weak and short-lived,
 And of small power in the understanding of (Thy)
 judgement and laws.⁷
6. For even if a man be perfect among the sons of
 men,
 (Yet), lacking the Wisdom that cometh from Thee,
 he is reckoned as nothing.
7. Thou didst choose me (to be) king of Thy people
 And a judge of Thy sons and daughters.⁸

¹ *Lit.* " Lord of thy mercy."

² *Lit.* " in."

³ Cp. Ps. xxxiii. 5, 6, 9, and Eccles. xlii. 15 (Hebrew), " By the word of God are His works," and xlii. 26 (Hebrew), " By His word He worketh His pleasure." There is, of course, no idea here yet of the Logos doctrine, but expressions like these contain the germ of the later conception.

⁴ Cp. Ps. viii. 6-8.

⁵ Cp. Prov. viii. 27-30; Eccles. i. 1, 8, 9, on the personification of Wisdom see *Introduction*, pp. x. ff.

⁶ Cp. Ps. cxvi. 16.

⁷ Cp. 1 Kings iii. 9, 11.

⁸ For the unusual expression cp. Isa. iv. 4 xliii. 6.

8. Thou commandedst (me) to build a temple on
 Thy holy mount,¹
 And in the city of Thy habitation ² a place of
 sacrifice,
 A copy of the holy tabernacle ³ which Thou
 preparedst beforehand from the beginning.⁴
9. And with Thee is Wisdom which knoweth Thy
 works,
 Being also present (with Thee) when Thou madest
 the world,⁵
 And understandeth that which is pleasing in
 Thine eyes,
 And what is right in Thy commandments.
10. Send her forth out of the holy heavens,
 And speed ⁶ her from the throne of Thy glory; ⁷
 That being present with me she may labour,
 And that I may know what is well-pleasing ⁸ in
 Thy sight.⁹
- II. For she knoweth all things and understandeth
 them,
 And will lead me in my actions wisely,
 And will guard me by her good repute.¹⁰

¹ Cp. 1 Chron. xxviii. 10; Eccles. xlvii. 13.

² *Lit.* "of Thy tabernacled."

³ Cp. Exod. xxv. 9, 40, xxvi. 30.

⁴ Cp. the teaching of the Rabbis according to which the Sanctuary was one of the seven things which were in existence before the Creation.

⁵ See note on vii. 22.

⁶ *Lit.* "send."

⁷ This expression is found several times in the Book of Enoch, once of the throne of the elect (cviii. 12), but usually of the throne of the Elect One (xlv. 3, lv. 4, lxii. 3, 5), also of the throne of the Son of Man (lxi. 27, 29).

⁸ Cp. the use of this word (εὐάρεστος) in 2 Cor. v. 9.

⁹ *Lit.* "before Thee."

¹⁰ This is Goodrick's rendering which seems to give the meaning of the Greek here best, *lit.* "glory." With the thought of the whole verse cp. 1 Cor. ii. 15.

IX. 12-18. **Solomon's Meditation.**

12. And (so) shall my works be acceptable ;
Yea, I will judge Thy people righteously,
And be worthy of my father's throne.
13. For what man can know the counsel of God ?
Or who shall conceive what the Lord willeth ? ¹
14. For the thoughts of mortals are timorous, ²
And our purposes are prone to fail.
15. For a corruptible body weigheth down the soul,
And the earthly tabernacle ³ oppresseth the care-
laden mind.
16. And with difficulty do we divine the things of the
earth,
And the things at hand do we discern with
labour ;
But the things in the heavens who can trace
out ? ⁴
17. And who can know Thy counsel unless Thou give
him wisdom,
And send Thy holy spirit from on high ? ⁵
18. And thus were made straight the paths of those
on earth,
And things pleasing unto Thee were taught to
men,
And by Wisdom were they saved.

¹ Cp. Isa. xl. 13 (Septuagint) ; Rom. xi. 34 ; 1 Cor. ii. 16.

² The word has the same sense as in Matt. viii. 16, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith ?" With this and the next verse cp. 1 Cor. ii. 14.

³ "The metaphor of a tent for the body was widespread among Greek philosophers (Pythagoreans and Platonists), and the view that the body is a burden or prison to the soul (σῶμα σῆμα) was a common one with Platonists and Stoics, and was a fundamental idea of the Alexandrian philosophy" (Thackeray, *op. cit.*, p. 132). The same thought occurs in 2 Cor. v. 1.

⁴ Cp. ii. (iv.) Esdras iv. 21 ; Rom. xi. 33, 34.

⁵ With this identification of Wisdom with the holy spirit (not, of course, in the Christian sense) cp. 1. 4-7, 1 Cor. ii. 7, 8.

X. 1-21. Wisdom's Activity among the Heroes of Old, and among Israel's Forefathers.¹

1. She ² protected the first-formed father of the world, (then) the sole created (man),³
And delivered him from his own transgression,⁴
2. And gave him strength to rule over all things.⁵
3. But an unrighteous man, having fallen from her in his anger,
Perished with his fratricidal rage;⁶
4. Through whom⁷ the earth having been drowned,
Wisdom again saved it,
Steering the righteous man by means of wood of small value.
5. She, again, when the nations had been confounded in their wicked confederation,⁸
Found the righteous man and preserved him blameless unto God,

¹ With this chapter begins the second part of the book. "In this and the succeeding chapters we have perhaps the first attempt, at all events in Hebrew Literature, at a philosophy of history. . . . To point his moral the writer avails himself of extra-Scriptural embellishments, but whether derived from oral tradition or from Apocryphic Literature it is difficult to say. In a few cases we can detect the sources of these additions, but probably some were due to the author's exuberant imagination. As part of this philosophy of history, the digression on the origin of idolatry (chapters xiii.-xv.) comes in naturally . . ." (Goodrick, *op. cit.*, p. 224 f.).

² It will be noticed that in this part of the book the proper name for Wisdom is not mentioned, with perhaps two exceptions. ³ *i. e.* at that time.

⁴ In the ancient pseudepigraphic book called *The Life of Adam and Eve*, §§ 14. ff., Adam's repentance is spoken of; he says to Eve: "Let us show great repentance, perhaps the Lord God will forgive us and have mercy upon us. . . ." In later Jewish Literature what is often said about Adam shows that he was regarded as having been forgiven and restored to God's favour.

⁵ Cp. Gen. 1. 26, 28, ix. 2.

⁶ This is Goodrick's excellent rendering.

⁷ This is the first time that the Flood is attributed to the wickedness of Cain.

⁸ *Lit.* "in agreement of wickedness."

- And kept him steadfast ¹ (when his heart yearned)
in pity for (his) son.
6. She, when the ungodly were perishing, delivered
the righteous man ²
When escaping the fire that came down upon
Pentapolis; ³
7. Of whose wickedness a witness still (there is),
A smoking waste is appointed (for this),
And fruit-bearing plants whose fair fruit ripeneth
not; ⁴
A pillar of salt standing (there) as a memorial of
an unbelieving soul.
8. For passing wisdom by,
Not only were they disabled from recognizing
the things that were good,
But they also left behind them a memorial of their
folly to the world, ⁵
That in the things wherein they erred they might
not be able to escape detection. ⁶
9. But Wisdom delivered out of their troubles those
that waited upon her.
10. When a righteous man fled from his brother's
wrath ⁷ she
Guided him in straight paths;

¹ *Lit.* "strong."

² *Cp.* 2 Pet. ii. 7, 8

³ *Cp.* Gen. xiv. 2.

⁴ The "apples of Sodom" are referred to by Josephus, *Jewish War*, IV. viii. 4: "It (Sodom) was of old a most happy land, both for the fruits it bore and the riches of its cities, although now it is all burnt up. It is related how, for the impiety of its inhabitants, it was burnt by lightning; in consequence of which there are still the remainders of that divine fire, and the traces of the five cities are still to be seen, as well as the ashes growing in their fruits, which fruits have a colour as if they were fit to be eaten, but if you pluck them with your hands, they dissolve into smoke and ashes."

⁵ *Lit.* "life," but the reference is to human life.

⁶ The meaning of this rather difficult line seems to be that the witness of the "Dead Sea fruits" and the memorial of the pillar of salt were lasting proofs of their wickedness,

⁷ *Cp.* Gen. xxvii. 41-45.

- She showed him the kingdom of God,¹
 And gave him knowledge of holy things;²
 She prospered him in his toils,
 And multiplied (with blessings) his labours;
 11. She stood by him when in covetousness men
 oppressed,³
 And made him rich;
 12. She guarded him from enemies,
 And from them that lie in wait she kept him
 safe,⁴
 And in his sore conflict she watched as judge,⁵
 That he might know that godliness is more
 powerful than aught⁶ else.
 13. The righteous man who was sold she deserted not,
 But delivered him from sin;⁷
 14. She went down with him into a dungeon,⁸
 And in (his) bonds she left him not,
 Until she had brought him the sceptre of a
 kingdom;⁹
 And (given him) power over them that had dealt
 tyrannously with him;
 Also false did she show those to be who had
 imputed evil to him;¹⁰
 And she gave him everlasting glory.¹¹

¹ Not, of course, in the technical sense; as Gregg says, the reference is probably to Jacob's dream, Gen. xxviii 10-17, "in which God revealed to him some of the providential agencies of the kingdom of God."

² Cp. Gen. xxxii. 24-32.

³ *Lit.* "in the covetousness of them that oppressed," probably in reference to Gen. xxxi. 38-42.

⁴ *Lit.* "acting as umpire."

⁵ It is not clear what this refers to; probably, as Goodrick surmises, some Jewish legend lies at the back of it: cp. *Jubilees* xxxvii.-xxxviii.

⁶ *Lit.* "every one."

⁷ Cp. Gen. xxxix. 9.

⁸ Cp. Gen. xl. 15 (Septuagint).

⁹ This is somewhat of an exaggeration; see, however, Gen. xli. 39-45.

¹⁰ *Lit.* "blamed him"

¹¹ Not to be taken in a literal sense; the Easterns are fond of glowing colours. Undying fame is what is meant, see vii. 13 and note.

15. She delivered an holy people ¹ and a blameless seed ¹ from a nation of oppressors.
16. She entered into the soul of a servant of the Lord,²
And withstood terrible kings with wonders and signs.
17. She rendered unto holy men the reward of their labours,
She guided them along a wondrous way,
And became unto them a covering ³ by day,
And for a flame of stars ⁴ by night.
18. She brought them through the Red Sea,
And led them through many waters; ⁵
19. But their enemies she drowned,
And from the depth of the abyss she cast them up.⁶
20. Therefore the righteous spoiled the ungodly,
And they sang praise, O Lord, to Thy Holy Name,
And extolled with one accord Thy hand which had fought for them;
21. For Wisdom opened the mouth of the dumb,
And made the tongues of babes eloquent.

¹ Again picturesque exaggerations not intended to be taken *au pied de la lettre*.

² The word "servant" (applied here to Moses as in xviii. 21 to Aaron) is not the ordinary one, it implies free, voluntary service, as opposed to the bond-servant.

³ Cp. Num. x. 34; Ps. cv. 39. The luminous cloud was both guide and a protection. Wisdom is here identified with it.

⁴ This expression "need not be explained as that of the sun and moon. To any one who knows the burning light of the constellations in the Eastern sky the expression is sufficient in itself" (Goodrick).

⁵ *Lit.* "much water."

⁶ Gregg quotes the interesting passage from Etheridge's translation of the Palestinian Targum (p. 494): "The sea and the earth had controversy one with the other. The sea said to the earth, Receive thy children; and the earth said to the sea, Receive thy murderers. But the earth willed not to swallow them, and the sea willed not to overwhelm them. . . . Then God swore to the earth that He would not require them of her in the world to come. Then did the earth open her mouth and swallow them up."

XI. 1-20. God's Dealings with Israel and Egypt.

1. She prospered their works in the hands of a holy prophet.¹
2. They journeyed through an uninhabited desert,²
And in trackless regions they pitched their tents.
3. They withstood (their) foes and repelled (their) enemies.
4. They thirsted, and called upon Thee,³
And there was given unto them water out of the flinty ⁴ rock,
And healing of (their) thirst out of the hard stone.
5. For through those things whereby their foes were punished,⁵
By these they in their need were benefited.
6. Instead of a river's ever-flowing fountain
Stirred ⁶ up with clotted blood ⁷
7. (As a rebuke for the decree for slaying babes),

¹ It is possible that this line belongs to the preceding section. The term "prophet" is applied to Moses in Deut. xxxiv. 10.

² Cp. Deut. xxxii. 10.

³ This is not in accordance with the Old Testament record: see Exod. xvii. 1-7; Num. xx. 8-11.

⁴ *Lit.* "precipitous"; cp. Deut. viii. 15 (Septuagint).

⁵ To the Israelites water had been an intense boon, but to the Egyptians the water of their rivers had been turned into blood. "There is a certain resemblance between this contrast and that in 1 Pet. iii. 20, where the drowning of the world by water is contrasted with the saving of the ark by the water, which carried it on its waves" (Gregg).

⁶ Reading with Codd. *ΝΑ, παραχθέντος.*

⁷ Cp. Exod. vii. 19-25. Gregg quotes Philo (*Mos.* i. 17) to the effect that "God determined to plague the Egyptians by water before anything else, because they exaggerated its worth, and viewed it as a source of all creative power." Josephus (*Antiq.* II. xiv. 1) says: "The water was not only of the colour of blood, but it brought those who ventured to drink of it great pains and bitter torment. Such was the river to the Egyptians; but it was sweet and fit for drinking to the Hebrews."

Thou gavest them abundant water, all unlooked-for,¹

8. Thou didst show (them) by (their) thirst at that time how Thou didst punish (their) adversaries.²

9. For when they were tried, albeit chastened in mercy,³

They understood how the ungodly were tormented, being judged in wrath;

10. For these Thou didst prove, admonishing (them) as a father,

But those Thou didst search out, condemning (them) as a stern king.⁴

11. Yea, and whether they⁵ were far off (from the righteous) or near (them), they were alike distressed;

12. For a double grief took hold of them,
And a groaning when they remembered the things that were past.⁶

13. For when they heard that through their own punishments

Others were being benefited, they perceived (the action of) the Lord.

14. For him that was cast forth aforetime, when (the infants) were exposed,⁷ they rejected with scorn,⁸

¹ *Lit.* "unhoped-for."

² The Greek of verses 6-8 is somewhat involved and difficult; in verse 6 the text is probably corrupt. In Deut. viii. 2, 3 we get a very different conception of the reason of all that happened to the Israelites in their wanderings in the desert.

³ Cp. Deut. viii. 2, 5, 16.

⁴ Contrast with this particularistic attitude the universalistic sentiments of verses 23 ff. of this chapter.

⁵ *i.e.* the Egyptians; the R.V. rendering (as above) seems the best way of expressing what apparently is meant, judging from the context.

⁶ The "double grief" consisted of their own calamities and the prosperity of the Israelites.

⁷ *Lit.* "in the exposure" (*i.e.* of the infants); cp. xviii. 5.

⁸ "They rejected with scorn" is Goodrick's rendering, which is preferable to the R.V. Cp. Exod. x. 11, 28.

- But ultimately ¹ admired,
 Having thirsted (in a way) not like (the thirst)
 of the righteous.²
15. But in requital of the foolish imaginings of their
 unrighteousness,
 By which they were led astray, they worshipped
 senseless reptiles and wretched vermin,
 Thou having sent upon them for vengeance a
 multitude of senseless animals,
16. In order that they might know that by what
 things a man sinneth, by these he is punished.³
17. For Thine all-powerful hand,
 That created the world out of formless matter,⁴

¹ *Lit.* "at the end of the issues."

² *Lit.* "having thirsted not like to the righteous." The meaning is that whereas the Egyptians first showed their scorn for Moses by casting him forth, later, when they heard of how he had brought forth water from the rock, they looked upon him with wonder; they thirsted in a different way from the Israelites, for the latter's thirst was quenched, whereas that of the Egyptians was not. The reference in the last line of the verse must be to some old legend.

³ "The idea of like being followed by like, of each sin finding a corresponding punishment, is characteristic of the Book of Wisdom (*e.g.* xi. 16). Possibly a trace of this retribution in kind is to be found in the play on words in Rom. i. 28; the rejecters of God are themselves rejected" (Thackeray, *op. cit.*, p. 225). See further *Jubilees* iv. 31; *Test. XII Patr.*, Gad, v. 9-11.

⁴ Gregg (*op. cit.*, p. 110) has a good note on this verse: "Formless matter is a Greek philosophical expression, belonging to a system of speculation altogether different from that of the Jews. The Jews believed in a creation out of nothing, the Greeks believed in the eternity of matter, and the arrangement of matter by mind, *cp.* Anaxagoras, *Diog. La.* ii. 3. There was a conflict, therefore, between philosophic dualism and religious monism: the Greeks conceived of two pre-existing eternals, God and matter, while the Jews held that God created all things out of nothing or out of Himself. It is impossible to say with certainty which view was held by the writer of Wisdom. Even Philo was not consistent, and oscillated between the two positions, and the writer of Wisdom was far more a Hebraist than Philo. It is quite possible that *formless matter* (*ἄμορφος ὕλη*) stands as a convenient Greek symbol for the Hebrew of Gen. i. 2, which is rendered by the LXX. *ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος* ('invisible and un-

- Lacked not the means to send upon them a multitude of bears or fierce lions,
 18. Or new-created beasts, full of rage, unknown,
 Either breathing out a fire-breathing blast,¹
 Or belching forth loud noises with smoke,
 Or flashing dreadful sparkles from their eyes;²
 19. Of which not only the harmfulness was able to
 consume them,
 But also the look,³ by terrifying, destroyed them.
 20. Yea, and without these they might have fallen
 by a single breath,⁴
 Being pursued by justice,
 And scattered abroad by the breath of Thy
 power.
 But all things by measure and number and
 weight didst Thou order.⁵

XI. 21—XII. 2. The Divine Compassion.

21. For to be greatly strong is Thine at all times;
 And the might of Thine arm who shall with-
 stand?
 22. For as a grain that turneth the balance⁶ so is
 the world before Thee,

organized'). Further, the use of *κτίειν* ('create') here is non-committal; it leaves the origin of matter out of sight, and deals merely with the arrangement of matter."

¹ Cp. Job. xli. 19, where Leviathan is spoken of as one out of whose mouth go "burning torches, and sparks of fire leap forth."

² In verse 18 the texts vary somewhat; the above is the translation of Cod. B.

³ Probably the idea of fascination by the eye is what is referred to here.

⁴ Cp. v. 23 and Eccles. xxxix. 28.

⁵ Cp. Job. xxviii. 25; Isa. xl. 12; and ii. (iv.) Esdras iv. 36, 37: "For the Holy One hath weighed the world, and with measure hath He measured the times, and by number hath He numbered the seasons."

⁶ *Lit.* "For that which turneth from the balance"; in the sight of God the world is as small as a grain that suffices to turn the balance; cp. Isa. xl. 15 (Septuagint).

And as a drop of dew at dawn that cometh down upon the earth.

23. But Thou hast mercy upon all men for Thou canst do all things,

And Thou dost overlook the sins of men that they may repent.¹

24. For Thou lovest all things that exist, and abhorrest nothing that Thou didst make,

For Thou wouldest have formed nothing if Thou didst hate it.

25. And how should aught have endured unless Thou didst so will?

Or how could that be preserved which was not called (into being) ² by Thee?

26. But Thou sparest all things for they are Thine, O Sovereign Lord That lovest souls.

XII. 1. For Thine incorruptible spirit is in all things.

2. Wherefore them that err ³ Thou dost convince ⁴ (of sin) little by little,

And dost admonish them in reminding them by means of the things wherein they sin,⁵

That escaping from their wickedness they may believe on Thee, O Lord.

¹ *Lit.* "unto repentance," or "with a view to repentance," cp. Rom. ii. 4: "... not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance."

² Cp. Rom. iv. 17.

³ *Lit.* "fall away."

⁴ Cp. John xvi. 8.

⁵ It is not easy to see what this means; but possibly the writer meant that in bringing them to repentance ("reminding" them, cp. verse 10 and xi. 23 and note) God convinced men of sin, so that the very sin is turned to good by acting as a deterrent; if this is so one may compare Longfellow's words:

"Saint Augustine! well hast thou said,
That of our vices we can frame
A ladder, if we will but tread
Beneath our feet each deed of shame."

XII. 3-11. God's Longsuffering towards the Canaanites.

3. Furthermore, the ancient inhabitants of Thy holy land,¹
4. Hating them because they practised detestable works of enchantments and unholy rites,
5. Merciless murderers of children,
And (partaking of) a banquet of entrail-devourers of human flesh and of blood,²
From the midst of their orgie,³
6. And parents, murderers of helpless souls,
Thou didst determine to destroy by the hands of our fathers,
7. That a worthy colony ⁴ of God's servants
That land might receive which to Thee is the most precious of all (lands).
8. But even these, as (being) men,⁵ Thou didst spare,
And didst send wasps ⁶ as forerunners of Thy host,
That they might be destroyed little by little; ⁷
9. (Yet) Thou wast not able to subdue the ungodly under the hand of the righteous in battle,
Nor by means of terrible beasts,⁸ nor by stern word, through (the mouth of) one, to root them out;
10. But sending judgement ⁹ (upon them) little by little Thou didst grant (them) a place of repentance,¹⁰

¹ For this name for Palestine cp. Zech. ii. 12, where it occurs for the first time.

² Recent excavations on the site of ancient Gezer by the Palestine Exploration Fund prove this to have been literally true.

³ Reading, with Goodrick, ἐκ μέσου μυστήθειας.

⁴ *Lit.* "a land of settlement." ⁵ Cp. Gen. vi. 3.

⁶ Cp. Exod. xxiii. 28; Deut. vii. 20; Josh. xxiv. 12.

⁷ Cp. Exod. xxiii. 29, 30.

⁸ Cp. Deut. xxxii. 24.

⁹ *Lit.* "judging," but the sense demands some such rendering as given above.

¹⁰ Cp. Rom. ix. 22, 23, Heb. xii. 17.

Not being ignorant that their nature by birth
was evil,

And their wickedness inborn,
And that their manner of thinking would in no
wise ever be changed,

11. For it was a seed accursed from the beginning;
Neither was it through fear of any that Thou
didst leave them unpunished for their sins.¹

XII. 12-18. The Righteousness and Forbearance of God.

12. For who shall say, What hast Thou done? Or who
shall withstand Thy judgement? ²
Or who shall accuse Thee for the destroyed
nations which Thou didst create? ³
Or who shall come before Thee as the avenger of
unrighteous men? ⁴
13. For neither is there any God but Thee, Who
careth for all,
That Thou shouldst show (to him) that Thou
didst not judge unjustly; ⁵
14. Neither shall king or prince be able to confront ⁶
Thee on behalf of those whom Thou hast
punished.
15. For being righteous ⁷ Thou rulest all things
righteously,

¹ These verses betray a somewhat immature conception of God.

² A quotation from Job ix. 12, 19 (Septuagint).

³ *Lit.* "didst make."

⁴ Cp. verse 21. There is a striking resemblance in the language between this line and Rom. ix. 19, 20, sufficient indeed to suggest a direct literary connection between the two, though it may be that both are based on Isa. xlv. 9, 10.

⁵ *i.e.* there is but one God (cp. Deut. xxxii. 39), no national gods who might come forth to champion their particular nation, according to the old belief.

⁶ The word is found in Acts xxvii. 15 of a ship facing the wind, in Clement, Rom. xxxiv. of an idle workman not looking his employer in the face, cp. Ep. Bar. v. 10. The meaning here is "to champion."

⁷ Cp. Gen. xviii. 25; Exod. ix. 27.

- Deeming it alien from Thy power
To condemn him that deserveth not to be
punished.
16. For Thy might is the origin of righteousness,
And Thy being Lord of all maketh Thee to spare
all.
17. For Thou showest Thy might¹ when not believed
in as to the fulness of Thy power,
And among them that do know it Thou dost
convince (them of their) rashness.²
18. But Thou, being Lord over Thy might, judgest in
gentleness,
And with much forbearance dost Thou govern us;
For the power is Thine wheresoever Thou wilt
(to exercise it).³

XII. 19-22. God's Forbearance the Example for Men.

19. But Thou didst teach Thy people by means of
suchlike works
That the righteous must be a lover of men;⁴
And Thou didst make Thy sons to be of good hope,
For Thou gavest repentance to them that sinned.
20. For if on the enemies of Thy servants and on
them that deserved death⁵
Thou didst take vengeance with so great care and
supplication,⁶

¹ For the expression cp. Rom. ix. 22.

² *i. e.* rashness in not acting according to God's will when they know to the full His power to punish them.

³ For both the thought and the language cp. Rom. ix. 22.

⁴ Since God had shown such longsuffering towards the Egyptians and Canaanites, the Israelites must show a like forbearance.

⁵ *Lit.* "that were due," or, "owed to death."

⁶ This is the reading of Cod. B (δεήσεως); God does not "take vengeance" until His forbearance has been exercised in every possible manner, even to the extent of pleading with men (cp. Isa. lxxv. 2, "I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people"). Cod. N reads διέσεως ("indulgence"), so R.V.; Cod. A omits the word altogether, so too the Latin Version.

- Giving them times and place whereby they might turn from their wickedness,¹
21. With how great discernment didst Thou judge Thy sons,
To whose fathers Thou gavest oaths and covenants of good promises.
22. While, therefore, Thou dost chasten us, our enemies Thou scourgest ten thousandfold,²
That we may take careful thought of Thy goodness when we judge (others),
And that when we are judged we may look for mercy.

XII. 23-27. The Heavy Judgement upon the Egyptians.

23. Wherefore also the unrighteous that lived in thoughtlessness of life
Thou didst torment through their own abominations.³
24. For, in truth, they went astray very far in the paths of error,
Taking as gods those which among the beasts of our enemies are despised,⁴
Deceived like silly children.
25. Therefore, as to children without reason,

¹ *Lit.* "change from their wickedness." With the whole verse cp. Rom. ix. 23

² *Lit.* "our enemies with a myriad scourges." Cp. 2 Macc. vi. 14, "For in the case of other nations the sovereign Lord doth with longsuffering forbear, until that He punish them when they have attained unto the full measure of their sins; but not so judged He as touching us, that He may not take vengeance on us afterwards when we be come unto the height of our sins;" and verse 12, "These punishments were not for the destruction but for the chastening of our race" (quoted by Goodrick from Grimm).

³ The reference, as the context shows, is to the Egyptians.

⁴ This is Goodrick's rendering (following Freudenthal): "our enemies" are the Gentiles "The Egyptians worshipped beasts which even Gentiles like themselves generally despised,—not merely things which were (like swine) abhorrent to the Jew" (Goodrick).

- Thou didst send judgement as a mockery.
 26. But they who will not be admonished by rebuking mockeries,¹
 Shall experience a judgement worthy of God.
 27. For through the sufferings whereat they were indignant,
 Being punished by means of those very creatures whom they supposed were gods
 Seeing Him Whom before they refused to know, they recognized the true God;
 Wherefore also the final judgement ² came upon them.

XIII. 1-9. The Worship of False Gods was a Step in the Seeking of the One True God.

1. For indeed vain are all men by nature, among whom there is ignorance of God,
 And from the good things that are seen they were not able to know Him that is,³
 Neither by giving heed to the works did they recognize the Artificer;
2. But either fire, or wind, or swift air,
 Or a circle of stars, or rushing water,
 Or luminaries of heaven, did they take to be the gods that rule the world.⁴
3. And if, delighting in the beauty of these, they supposed them to be gods,
 Let them know how much better than these is the Master;
 For the first Author of beauty created them;
4. But if it was by being astounded at their power and effect,

¹ *Lit.* "mockeries of rebuke"; see preceding verse.

² *Lit.* "the last end of condemnation." With the whole idea of the verse cp. Rom. i. 28.

³ Cp. Exod. iii. 14, "I am that I am."

⁴ For the widespread Jewish belief in elemental spirits cp. e. g., Jubilees ii. 2; Enoch lx. 16-21, lxxxii. 7 ff. In Enoch lxxx. 7 in reference to "the whole order of the stars," it is said: "Yea, they shall err and take them for gods."

Let them understand from them how much more powerful is He Who formed them ;

5. For from the greatness of the beauty even of created things

Correspondingly is their first Maker regarded.

6. Nevertheless for these there is small blame,

For they, in truth, peradventure err

(While) seeking God and desiring to find Him ;¹

7. For being occupied with His works they make diligent search,²

And are persuaded by the appearance of them, for beautiful are the things seen.

8. But, nevertheless,³ even they are not to be pardoned.

9. For if they had the power to know so much,

(Viz.) That they were able to make conjectures⁴ (regarding) the world,

How was it they that found not sooner the Master of these things?

XIII. 10-19. The Folly of those who worship the Objects of their own Handiwork.

10. Miserable are they, and on dead things are their hopes (fixed) ;

They called gods the works of men's hands,

Gold and silver, wrought with careful art,

And likenesses of animals,

Or a useless stone, the work of an ancient hand.

11. Yea, and if some wood-cutting mechanic, having sawn down a tree easily moved,⁵

¹ Cp. Acts xvii. 23, 29, 30.

² Cp. Rom. 1. 19-22.

³ *Lit.* "again." They are not to be pardoned for the reasons given in verses 3-5, and in 9; cp. Rom. 1. 20-23.

⁴ The Greek word (*στοχάζομαι*) is difficult to render satisfactorily here; it means originally "to aim" at something in a literal sense, then "to aim" in a metaphorical sense; then it comes to mean "to investigate," and "to conjecture," or the like.

⁵ The passage 11 ff. is obviously based on Isa. xlv. 9-20; cp. Jer. x. 3-5.

Hath skilfully stripped all its bark,
And fashioning it in comely form,
Constructeth a useful vessel for the service of
life; ¹

12. And burning the (chips of wood) cast aside ² from
his handiwork for preparing his food, he
eateth his fill;

13. And taking some remnant of these, ³ useful for
nothing,—

A crooked piece of wood and full of knots,—
He carveth ⁴ it with diligence during his leisure
(hours), ⁵

And shapeth it with skill during his (time of)
relaxation, ⁶

And fashioneth it into the image of a man,

14. Or maketh it like some paltry animal,
Smearing it with vermilion and making its surface
red with paint, ⁷

And covering over ⁸ every blemish there is upon
it,

15. And having for it made a bracket ⁹ worthy of it,
He setteth it in a wall making it secure with a
nail. ¹⁰

16. Then he taketh thought for it that it fall not
down, ¹¹

¹ Cp. Baruch vi. 59.

² R.V. "refuse" is hardly the word to use; the reference is merely to the chips of wood which are used to light a fire in order to prepare food.

³ i. e. of these bits of wood.

⁴ In the Greek the verbs of this and the following verses are in the past, but it is better to translate them in the present tense.

⁵ *Lit.* "with the diligence of his idleness"; the words could be taken in an ironical sense.

⁶ *Lit.* "with the skill of his indolence" (or the like), this, too, might be ironical.

⁷ *Lit.* "rouge."

⁸ *Lit.* "smearing", the same word as in the preceding line.

⁹ *Lit.* "a chamber," or the like; something in the form of a bracket seems to be intended on account of the words in the next line.

¹⁰ *Lit.* "iron." ¹¹ Cp. the story of Dagon, 1 Sam. v. 1-5.

Knowing that it is unable to help itself,
—For in truth it is an image and hath need of
help;—

17. And when he prayeth concerning his goods and
his marriage and his children,¹
He is not ashamed to address a soulless object ;
Yea, for health he calleth upon that which is
weak,
18. And for life he beseecheth a dead thing,
And for aid he supplicateth a thing wholly without
experience,²
And for a journey a thing which cannot move
a step,
19. And for gain and for trade and success for (the
work of) his hands
He asketh capacity of a thing which with its
hands is wholly incapable.

XIV. 1-31. The Folly and Evil Effects of Idolatry.

1. Again one preparing to sail and about to journey
upon the raging waves,
Calleth upon a piece of wood more rotten than the
vessel that carrieth him.
2. For that (vessel) the lust for gains devised,
And an artificer, (even) wisdom,³ built it ;
3. And Thy providence, O Father, guideth it,
For even in the sea Thou gavest a way,
And in the waves a safe path,
4. Showing that Thou canst save out of every
(danger),
So that even without art a man may put to sea.
5. And Thou willest that the works of Thy wisdom
should not be idle ;

¹ Cp. the *teraphim*, or household gods, of the Israelites.

² Isa. xlv. 7 ; Jer. xiv. 22.

³ The contrast in the conception of Wisdom between this part of the book and the first part suggests composite authorship, see Introduction, pp. xiii. ff.

- Therefore even to the smallest piece of wood¹
do men entrust their lives,
And passing through the surge on a raft they
come through safely.
6. For in the beginning also when the proud giants
were perishing,
The hope of the world, taking refuge on a raft,
Left behind to the world a seed of generation,
Thy hand guiding the helm.
7. For blessed is the wood by means of which came
righteousness;
8. But that which is made with hands is accursed,
both it and he that made it,
The one because he made it, the other, the cor-
ruptible thing² (because) it was named a god.
9. For equally hateful to God are both the ungodly
man and his ungodliness;³
10. For both that which is made, together with him
that made, shall be punished.
11. Wherefore also upon the idols of the Gentiles
shall there be a visitation,
For (belonging to) God's creation⁴ they became
an abomination,
And stumbling-blocks⁵ to the souls of men,
And a snare⁵ to the feet of the foolish.
12. For the devising of idols is the beginning of
fornication,⁶ and the invention of them the
corruption of life;

¹ The reference to the most fragile little boat.

² Cp. Rom. i. 23.

³ *i. e.* his handiwork.

⁴ *Lit.* "in the creation of God", all that God created was intended to be for man's benefit, this was, therefore, a misuse of His good gifts.

⁵ For the language cp. Josh. xxiii. 13.

⁶ The writer most probably intended this to be understood in a literal sense; he is referring to the Gentiles to whom the spiritual adultery of Israel in forsaking Jehovah for other gods (cp. Exod. xxxiv. 15, 16 and often elsewhere) would not apply. The impure rites of heathen worship are spoken of in Hos. iv. and elsewhere in the Old Testament. As Goodrick rightly says: "The traditional character of the Greek gods

13. For neither were they from the beginning, nor shall they continue for ever;
14. For by the empty imagining¹ of men entered they into the world,
And therefore was a speedy end devised for them.
15. For a father afflicted with untimely grief,
Having made an image of a child quickly taken away,
Now honoured him as a god that once was a dead human being;²
And delivered to those that were under him mysteries and solemn rites.
16. Then, in process of time, the ungodly custom having grown strong was observed as a law,³
And by the commands of rulers graven images were worshipped;
17. The which men not being able to honour in their presence⁴ because they dwelt far off,
Imagining the likeness from afar,
They made a visible image of the king they honoured,
That by their zeal they might flatter the absent as though present.⁵

was, of course, a further incentive to looseness of life, while some semi-Oriental cults actually demanded it. Of this our author could not be ignorant."

¹ *Lit.* "vainglory," but this hardly suits the context here

² *Lit.* "man," but the "child" in the preceding line justifies the rendering given above.

³ "'Wisdom' suggests two entirely different origins for idolatry, (1) the worship of deceased offspring; and (2) the pride of princes. These he endeavours to connect by verse 16 line 1; when once the ungodly custom of idolatry had become usual and legal, it was a short step to the deification of kings. The first theory approaches to that of Euhemerus, who believed that the Greek gods were deified men . . . Authentic instances of the worship of deceased children are few; on the other hand, ancestor-worship certainly formed part of many ancient religions. . . ." (Goodrick).

⁴ *Lit.* "sight."

⁵ The reference is to the deification of rulers which became customary from the time of Alexander.

18. But unto a yet higher pitch of worship
Did the ambition of the artificer urge the
ignorant;
19. For he, desiring peradventure to please one in
authority,
Forced by his art the likeness to greater
beauty;
20. And the multitude, allured by the grace of his
handiwork,
Now regarded as an object of worship him that
a little before was honoured as a man.¹
21. And this became a snare ² unto the life (of men),
For men, in bondage either to calamity or
tyranny,
Invested stones and stocks with the incom-
municable Name.³
22. So then it was not enough that men should go
astray regarding the knowledge of God,
But living in a great conflict ⁴ (caused by)
ignorance,
All those great evils they call peace.
23. For either slaughtering children in solemn rites,
or (celebrating) secret mysteries,
Or holding frantic revels of strange ordinances,⁵
24. They keep neither their lives nor their marriages
pure,
But one either lying in wait for another slayeth
him or grieveth him by committing adultery.
25. And all things confusedly are (filled with) blood
and murder, robbery and fraud,

¹ "So the Segestans of Sicily actually worshipped as a hero Philip the pirate, their enemy, because he was so handsome (Hdt. v. 47)" (Goodrick).

² *Lit.* "ambush"; cp. Acts xxiii. 16.

³ Not the "Shem ha-mephoresh," the Tetragrammaton, but the name of the One God which must never be shared with any other god; cp. Isa. xlii. 8.

⁴ *i. e.* the conflict between idolatry and the worship of the One and only God; cp. v. 20.

⁵ The reference here and in the following verses is to the various rites and practices of Greek and Phrygian mysteries.

- Corruption, faithlessness, tumult, perjury,
 26. Confusion of the good, forgetfulness of favour,
 Defiling of souls, mixing-up of sexes,
 Disorder in marriage, adultery and debauchery.
 27. For the worship of those nameless idols ¹
 Is the beginning and cause and end of every
 evil;
 28. For either they ² make merry unto madness, or
 prophesy false things,
 Or else they ³ live unrighteously or easily for-
 swear themselves.
 29. For, putting their trust in lifeless idols,
 Though swearing wickedly they anticipate no
 punishment.
 30. But on both accounts shall just doom pursue
 them,
 Because they thought evilly of God and gave
 heed to idols,
 And (because) they swore deceitfully, showing
 contempt for holiness.
 31. For not the power of them that were sworn by,
 But the justice upon ⁴ those that sin,
 Ever pursueth the transgression of the wicked.

XV. 1-6. Israel's Faithfulness to God.

1. But Thou, our God, art loving ⁵ and true,
 Longsuffering and in mercy ordering all things.
 2. For even if we sin, we are Thine, knowing Thy
 strength;
 But we shall not sin, knowing that we are
 accounted Thine.
 3. For to know Thee is perfect righteousness,
 And to know Thy power is the root ⁶ of immor-
 tality.

¹ *i. e.* idols which may not be named; cp. Exod. xxiii. 13.

² *i. e.* those who take part in the orgies referred to in verse 23.

³ *i. e.* those referred to in verse 24.

⁴ *Lit.* "kind" or "helpful."

⁵ *Lit.* "of."

⁶ Cp. Eccles. i 20.

4. For neither did the evil device of men's art lead us astray,
Nor the painter's ¹ fruitless labour,
A form stained with various colours;
5. The sight of which to the foolish resulteth ² in lust,³
Yea, he lusteth for the breathless form of a dead image.
6. Lovers of evil things and worthy of suchlike hopes
Are they that make, and they that lust after, and they that worship (such things).

XV. 7-17. The Folly of the Makers of Idols.

7. For the potter ⁴ laboriously kneading the soft earth,
Mouldeth each several thing for our service;
But from the same clay doth he fashion
Both the vessels which serve to clean uses,
And those of a contrary sort, all in like manner;
But what is to be the use of each of these
The potter is judge.
8. And also, labouring to an evil end, he mouldeth a vain god out of the same clay;
He who but a little before was born from the earth,
After a little while goeth whence he was taken,
Being required to render back the soul which was lent him,⁵
9. Howbeit, he hath anxious care, not because his powers must fail,
Nor because his span of life is short,
But (it is because) he matcheth himself with goldsmiths and melters of silver,

¹ *Lit* "shadow-depicter."

² *Lit*. "cometh."

³ Reading with Codd. SAC, ὑπεξίεν (Cod. B ὑνειδος).

⁴ Cp. Isa. xlv. 9; Jer. xviii. 4; Rom. ix. 21-23.

⁵ *Lit*. "the loan of his soul being demanded back." A man, made of clay (born of the earth), makes a god of clay, and himself returns to clay.

- He imitateth them that mould brass,
 And esteemeth it a thing to be proud of ¹ that he
 mouldeth counterfeits.
10. His heart is ashes, and his hope of less value
 than earth,
 And his life of less honour than clay,
11. Because he was ignorant of Him that formed him,
 And (of Him) that inspired into him an energizing
 soul,
 And (of Him) that breathed into him a vital
 spirit ;
12. But he reckoned our life to be a plaything,
 And our life-time to be a merry fair for making
 profit ;
 For, saith he, one must get gains from some-
 where, though it be by evil means.²
13. For this man beyond all others knoweth that he
 sinneth,
 Out of earthy matter making brittle vessels and
 graven images.
14. Yet most foolish of all,³ and naïve ⁴ beyond the
 soul of babe,
 Are the enemies of Thy people who oppress them ;
15. Because they regarded all the idols of Gentiles
 as gods,
 Which have neither the use of eyes for seeing,
 Nor nostrils for drawing breath,
 Nor ears for hearing,
 Nor fingers of hands for feeling,
 And their feet are helpless for walking.⁵
16. For a man made them,
 And one whose soul was borrowed formed them ;
 But no man hath power to form a god like Him.⁶
17. Yet, being mortal, he maketh a dead thing with
 (his) lawless hands ;

¹ *Lit.* " glory."

² *Lit.* " out of evil."

³ Reading, with Codd. AC, *πέντων*.

⁴ *Lit.* " miserable."

⁵ With verse 15 cp. Ps. cxv. 4-7, cxxxv. 15-17.

⁶ From the point of view of the heathen his god was on a level with Jehovah.

For he is better than the objects of his worship,
Forasmuch as ¹ he, indeed, was living, but they
never (were alive).

XV. 18—XVI. 14. Egyptian Worship. Punishment on the Egyptians and Israelites, the Contrast.

18. Yea, and the most hateful creatures do they worship;

For being compared (with others) in senselessness they are worse than others; ²

19. Nor are they to be desired, as though (they were) by chance beautiful (as compared) with the appearance of (other) creatures,

But they escaped both the praise of God and His blessing. ³

XVI. 1. Therefore they were worthily punished by like (animals), ⁴

And tormented by a multitude of vermin.

2. Instead of which punishment, blessing Thine own people,

A rare ⁵ dainty for the desire of (their) appetite Thou didst prepare, (namely) quails for food;

3. To the end that those, ⁶ desiring food, Might on account of the hideousness of the (vermin) sent among them,

Turn even from their necessary appetite,

¹ Reading with Cod. N, ἀνθρώπων.

² The reference is to the "hateful creatures." It is merely the author's exaggerativeness which regards the animals worshipped by the Egyptians as more senseless or brutish than other animals.

³ This line is obscure "It may be that Pseudo-Solomon thought, in accordance possibly with legend, that the reptiles were exempted from God's blessing and approval. Or perhaps Churton is right, 'through man's misuse of them they are severed from the approval and blessing originally bestowed on them by the Creator,' Gen. i. 22, 25." (Goodrick).

⁴ This the author illustrates as he proceeds.

⁵ *l. it.* "strange."

⁶ *i. e.* the Egyptians.

- While these,¹ being in want for a little while,
Might even partake of a rare dainty.
4. For it was needful that inexorable want should
come upon those who had dealt tyrannously;²
But for these³ only that it might be shown how
their enemies were tormented.
5. For even when there came upon them³ terrible
raging of wild beasts,
And they were perishing by the bites of writhing
serpents,
Thy wrath continued not to the uttermost;
6. But for admonition were they troubled for a
little space,
Having a token of preservation⁴ for a remem-
brance of Thy holy Law;⁵
7. For he that turned towards (it) was not saved
because of that which was seen,
But because of Thee, Saviour of all.
8. And in this Thou didst persuade even our enemies,
For Thou art He that delivereth from all evil;
9. For them, in truth, the bites of locusts and flies
did slay,⁶
And there was not found healing for their life,
Because they deserved to be punished by such-
like (creatures);
10. But (as for) Thy sons, not even the teeth of poison-
spitting dragons o'ercame (them),
For Thy mercy came unto⁷ them and healed
them.
11. For they were bitten to remind them⁸ of Thine
oracles,
And they were soon delivered,
Lest, falling into deep forgetfulness,

¹ *i. e.* the Israelites.² *i. e.* the Egyptians.³ *i. e.* the Israelites.⁴ The brazen serpent; cp. Num xxi. 9.⁵ *i. e.* to remind them that they must observe God's ordinances.⁶ Rhetorical exaggeration.⁷ *Lit.* "came alongside of."⁸ *Lit.* "for a remembrance."

- They should be bereft ¹ of Thy beneficence.
12. For, indeed, it was neither herb nor unguent that
healed them,
But Thy word, O Lord, that healeth all things; ²
13. For Thou hast power over life and death,
And ledest down to the gates of Hades, ³ and
ledest up (therefrom).
14. A man slayeth in his wickedness,
And the spirit that is gone forth re-formeth not
again,
Nor doth he release the soul that hath been taken.

**XVI. 15-29. The Elements were the Enemies of
the Egyptians, but friendly to the Israelites.**

15. But Thy hand it is impossible to escape.
16. For ungodly men, denying knowledge of Thee,
Were scourged by the might of Thine arm,
Pursued by strange rains ⁴ and hails and pitiless
showers,
And utterly consumed by fire.
17. For what was most strange, in water which
quencheth all things
The fire wrought more mightily; ⁵
For nature ⁶ (itself) is the champion of the
righteous.
18. For at one time the flame lost its fierceness, ⁷
Lest it should burn up the creatures sent against
the ungodly,

¹ Reading ἀπερίστατοι; the usual reading, ἀπερίσπαστοι, hardly gives sense ("should not be distracted").

² Cp. Ps. cvii. 20. ³ Cp. Ps. cvii. 18. ⁴ Cp. Exod. ix. 24.

⁵ An exaggerative account of Exod. ix. 24, "So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous . . ."

⁶ *Lit.* "the world," but clearly the forces of nature is what is meant.

⁷ The reference is apparently to the fact that the Israelites did not suffer from the visitation: "Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail" (Exod. ix. 26), though, it is true, the next line does not at first sight bear this out; see verse 22.

- But they beholding (this) might know they were pursued by the judgement of God.
19. But at another time in the midst of water it flameth beyond the power of (ordinary) fire,¹
That it may destroy the products of an unrighteous land.²
20. Instead of which Thou feddest Thy people with angels' food,
And bread prepared without labour didst Thou send to them from Heaven,
Having the virtue of all sweetness, and fitting for every taste.
21. For its essence³ manifested Thy sweetness towards Thy children,
And ministering to the desire of him that ate⁴ it, Tempered itself according as (each) man desired.⁵
22. But snow and ice endured fire, and melted not,⁶
That they might know that the crops of (their) enemies
The fire, blazing in the hail
And flashing in the rains, was destroying;
23. And this again, that righteous men might be nourished,
Did forget its own power.
24. For the creation, serving Thee its Maker,
Straineth itself for punishment against the ungodly,
And slackeneth for beneficence on behalf of them that trust in Thee.

¹ This, like other details given in these verses, may well be echoes of legends based upon what happened to the Israelites during the Egyptian bondage.

² Cp. Exod. ix. 25.

³ Reading *ὑποστάσις αὐτοῦ* (most authorities read *σου*), but the bread, or manna, is the subject of the whole verse.

⁴ *Lit.* "that took it."

⁵ *i. e.* altered its taste according to the desire of the eater; clearly a legendary *trait*.

⁶ Cp. Exod. xvi. 14; Num. xi. 7, 8; but the writer's statement is directly refuted by Exod. xvi. 21.

25. Wherefore, also, at that time, changing itself
 into all forms,
 It ministered to Thine all-nourishing bounty,
 According to the desire of them that needed.
26. In order that Thy sons, whom Thou, O Lord,
 didst love, might learn
 That it is not the growth of the crops¹ that
 nourisheth men,²
 But Thy word which preserveth them that believe
 in Thee.³
27. For that which was not marred by fire,
 Being merely warmed by a brief ray of the sun,
 melted away;
28. That it might be known that we must rise before
 the sun to give thanks unto Thee,
 And must plead with Thee at the dawning of the
 light.
29. For the hope of the unthankful shall melt as the
 winter's hoar-frost,
 And shall flow away like water that hath no use.

**XVII. 1—XVIII. 4. Darkness for the Egyptians ;
 Light for Israel.**

1. For great are Thy judgements and hard to
 explain ;
 Wherefore undisciplined souls did err.
2. For lawless men, thinking to lord it over a holy
 nation,
 Were prisoners of darkness and fettered captives
 of a long night,
 Kept close beneath their roofs, they lay exiled
 from eternal providence.
3. For thinking to escape from (the results of) their
 secret sins,
 Under the dark curtain of forgetfulness,
 They were scattered, stricken with terrible awe,

¹ *Lt.* " the generations of the fruits."

² *Lt.* " man."

³ Cp. Deut viii. 3 (Septuagint).

- And sore troubled by spectral forms.¹
4. For not even the (dark) recess that held them
kept them from fears,
But noises troubling them sore sounded round
about (them),
And phantoms, dejected and with gloomy visages,
appeared.
 5. And no force of fire was strong enough to give
them light,
Neither were the bright flames of stars
Strong enough to illumine that hideous night.
 6. But there shone through to them only
A self-kindled fire causing great fear,²
And being greatly affrighted by that sight when
it was not seen,
They accounted still worse the things when they
were seen.³
 7. For the tricks of magic art lay low,⁴
And the rebuke for the vaunting of their wisdom
was ignominious.
 8. For they that promised to drive away terrors and
frights from a diseased soul,
These themselves were sick with a ludicrous terror ;
 9. For even if no troublous thing affrighted them,
Yet, scared with the creepings of vermin and
hissings of reptiles,
 10. They perished trembling,
Even refusing to look upon the air which could
on no side be escaped.
 11. For a cowardly thing by nature is wickedness, (and)
being condemned it beareth witness thereto,⁵

¹ It is highly probable that all that is said in this and the following verses about ghosts is re-echoed from ancient Jewish legend

² *Lit.* " full of fear "

³ *i. e.* Bad as the anticipation was, the actual experience was worse.

⁴ So Goodrick; cp. Exod. vii. 11, 12, viii. 7, ix. 11.

⁵ R V. following Cod. S and Cod. A in part renders : " For wickedness, condemned by a witness within, is a coward thing." The rendering given above follows Cod. B.

- And, being hard pressed by conscience, constantly addeth thereto;¹
12. For fear is nothing but the giving up of the help²
(that comes) from reasoning;
13. And the expectation (of help) that is within,
being too small,
Maketh of greater account this ignorance than
the cause which bringeth the torment.³
14. But they all through a night which, in truth, was
powerless,
And came upon them from the recesses Hades
(likewise) powerless,
Sleeping the same sleep.⁴
15. Now were haunted by portents of apparitions,
And now were paralysed by the soul's surrender;⁵
For sudden and unexpected fear came upon⁶
them.
16. Then, therefore, whosoever fell down there,
Was kept locked up in a prison not of iron;
17. For whether he were a husbandman or a shepherd,
Or a labourer who toiled⁷ in a desert place,
He was overtaken and suffered that inevitable
necessity;

¹ *i.e.* to its cowardice; wickedness is identified with the wicked doer. R.V. renders: "forecasteth the worst (lot)," which is poorly attested, being only found in a late hand of Cod. N.

² *Lit.* "helps."

³ Goodrick explains these verses well, he says: "Reason in the face of tormenting conscience has surrendered her powers: the hope from within (which should be founded on reason) is all too feeble. Man has nothing to rely on, and he naturally counts his ignorance of what is causing his terrors as the worst of his misfortunes. The passage, in fact, includes two psychological truths: first, that 'conscience doth make cowards of us all'; and secondly, that 'dangers unknown are more terrible than even worse dangers which are understood and can be fathomed'" (*op. cit.*, p. 345).

⁴ The language is presumably metaphorical; it is difficult to see what the line means otherwise.

⁵ Referring to verse 12.

⁶ Cod. N reads: "was poured upon."

⁷ *Lit.* "of toils."

18. For with one chain of darkness were all bound ;
 Whether there were a whistling wind,
 Or a melodious sound of birds among the spread-
 ing branches,
 Or a (sound of the) measured flow¹ of water
 running apace,²
19. Or the harsh crash of rocks being hurled down,
 Or the unseen running of animals bounding
 along,
 Or the voice of wild beasts harshly roaring,
 Or an echo rebounding from a hollow of the
 hills,—
 They paralysed them, terrifying (them).³
20. For the whole world was enlightened with clear
 light,
 And was occupied with (its) unhindered labours,
21. But over them alone was spread a heavy
 night,
 An image of the darkness that was to receive
 them ;⁴
 But yet heavier than darkness were they unto
 themselves.⁵
- XVIII. 1. But for Thy holy ones there was a very
 great light ;
 Hearing their voice, but seeing no form,
 They accounted them happy because they had
 not⁶ suffered ;⁷

¹ *Lat.* "rhythm."

² *Lat.* "with force"

³ The writer describes in these verses how all the most natural sounds had the effect of frightening the Egyptians because they were in darkness (cp. Exod. x. 21, 22), all these sounds were taking place in the light around (cp. Exod. x. 23), and penetrated into their darkened sphere, causing them terrible fear. The whole is, of course, highly imaginative.

⁴ *i. e.* in Hades; the traditional Hebrew Sheol conception had become developed by this time; a place of torment for the wicked was believed in.

⁵ Their craven fear was worse for them than the darkness.

⁶ Reading, with Cod. A, *οὐ* instead of *οὐκ*.

⁷ *i. e.* the Egyptians heard the voice of the Israelites and thought how happy they were in contrast to what they (the Egyptians) were suffering.

2. And because they who were aforetime wronged
did not hurt them,¹ they¹ were thankful,
And owing to the difference that had come about,²
they¹ sought favour from them.³
3. In place of this,⁴ a burning pillar of fire
As a guide for (their) unknown journey,
A harmless sun⁵ to light their honourable exile,⁶
Thou didst provide
4. For worthy were they⁷ to be deprived of light
and to be imprisoned by darkness,
That guarded Thy sons closely shut up,
Through whom the incorruptible light of the Law
was to be given to the world.⁸

**XVIII. 5-19. How the Egyptians were punished
by Retributive Justice.**

5. Those who sought to slay the infants of the
holy ones,
—One single child had been exposed and had
been saved—
(From them) Thou didst take away, as a retribu-
tion,⁹ the multitude of their children,
And didst destroy them altogether in a mighty
flood.¹⁰
6. That night was known beforehand to our fathers,
In order that, knowing of a surety on what oaths¹¹
they trusted, they might be of good cheer.
7. (And) by Thy people was expected

¹ *i. e.* the Egyptians

² *Viz.* that the Egyptians were now the sufferers.

³ *i. e.* the Israelites, *cp.* Exod. xi. 8.

⁴ *i. e.* of this darkness

⁵ *Cp.* Ps. cxxi. 6 "The sun shall not smite thee by day."

⁶ *i. e.* the wanderings in the wilderness

⁷ *i. e.* the Egyptians

⁸ *Cp.* what is said in the midrash *Pesiqta* (186a), that the Law was originally offered to all the world, but that Israel alone accepted it.

⁹ *Lit.* "rebuke."

¹⁰ *Lit.* "water."

¹¹ Presumably the oaths made to the Patriarchs.

The salvation of the righteous, and destruction of
(their) enemies ;

8. For as Thou didst take vengeance upon the
adversaries,

By this, calling us unto Thyself, Thou didst
glorify (us).

9. For in secret did the holy children of good men
sacrifice,

And with one accord did they set forth the divine
law,¹

That likewise of the same good things ²

And of the dangers ³ the holy ones should par-
take,

The fathers already leading the songs of praise.

10. But there sounded back in discord the cry of the
enemies,

And a piteous voice ⁴ was borne abroad by the
lamentation for the children.

11. And with the same doom servant and master
were punished together,

The common man suffering the same things with
the king ; ⁵

12. And all together under one form ⁶ of death

Had corpses without number ;

So much so that the living were insufficient to
bury them,⁷

Since at one moment ⁸ their very cherished
offspring was destroyed.

¹ *Lit.* " the law of divineness " ; judging from the fourth line of this verse the reference must be to the law which enjoins divine worship

² *i. e.* worship and praise.

³ *i. e.* from the Egyptians.

⁴ *Cod. B* omits " voice."

⁵ *Cp.* *Exod. xii. 29.* Gregg quotes from the Jerusalem Targum (*Etheridge, Targums*, p. 477) " From the first-born son of Pharaoh . . . to the sons of the kings who were captives in the dungeon as hostages ; and who, for having rejoiced at the servitude of Israel, were punished as the Egyptians "

⁶ *Lit.* " name," an unusual use of the word

⁷ *Cp.* *Numb. xxxiii. 4*, of which the above is an exaggerated account.

⁸ *Lit.* " turn of the scale."

13. For disbelieving all things by reason of the enchantments,¹
 Upon the destruction of the firstborn they confessed the people to be God's son.²
14. For while peaceful silence enwrapped all things,
 And night in her own swiftness was in mid-course,³
15. Thine all-powerful word from heaven out of the royal throne
 Leapt, a stern warrior, into the midst of the doomed land,⁴
16. Bearing as a sharp sword Thine unalterable commandment;
 And, standing, it filled all things with death;
 And it touched the heaven, yet trod upon the earth.
17. Then forthwith apparitions of dreams
 Terribly dismayed them,
 And unlooked-for fears came upon them,
18. And here one, there one, cast down halt dead,⁵
 Made manifest for what cause he was dying;

¹ i. e. disbelieving in the power of God because Pharaoh's magicians showed themselves as clever as Moses

² Cp. Exod. iv. 22: "Israel is my son, my firstborn."

³ Cod B adds "all things" again, but it is omitted by Bab, and occurs in no other manuscript

⁴ This hypostatization of the word of God in this and the following verses comes very close to its fully developed personality in the Targums, thus, in the Targum of Onkelos, Exod. xix. 17 is explained as meaning that "Moses led the people forth to meet the Word of God." Similarly the words of Deut. i. 30, "The Lord God goeth before you," is paraphrased in the same Targum: "Jehovah, your God, Whose Word leadeth you." More pointed still is this Targum's explanation of Deut. iv. 19, "Lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven and when thou seest the sun and the moon and the stars, even all the host of heaven, thou be drawn away and worship them . . ."; this is thus explained: "The other nations are subject unto the stars, but Israel is the heritage of Memra" (the Word).

⁵ The reference is, of course to the death of the firstborn among the Egyptians.

19. For the dreams, perturbing them, did foreshow this;¹
That they might perish, not ignorant of the cause
for which they suffered.

XVIII. 20-25. Death came, too, upon Israel, but was withdrawn through the Mediation of a Blameless Man.

20. The trial of death touched also the righteous,²
And there was in the wilderness the destruction
of a multitude;³
Yet not for long did the wrath endure.⁴
21. For a blameless man⁵ hastened to be their champion,
Bringing the armour of his own ministry,
Prayer and the propitiation of incense;⁶
He withstood the indignation and set a limit to
the calamity,
Showing that he was Thy servant.
22. And he overcame the wrath,⁷ not by strength of
body, nor by the efficacy of weapons,
But by a word did he subdue the punisher,⁸

¹ *i. e.* the wrath of God, which the dreams are supposed by the writer to have indicated

² The writer idealizes the Israelites

³ Cp. Num. xvi. 41-50

⁴ After 14,700 had perished, see Num. xvi. 49

⁵ It is curious the way in which estimation for Aaron increased in post-Biblical times among the Rabbis, one of the earliest examples of this is found in *Pirke Aboth* i. 13, where Rabbi Hillel says "Be of the disciples of Aaron, loving peace, and following after peace; loving your fellow-creatures, and bringing them nigh to the Law." The characteristic of gentleness and peacefulness became ascribed to Aaron more and more by the later Rabbis.

⁶ Cp. Num. xvi. 47, Lev. xvi. 12, 13

⁷ Reading $\chi\acute{o}\lambda\omicron\nu$ for $\delta\chi\lambda\omicron\nu$ ("crowd"), the latter, though found in all the manuscripts, must be a corruption, as it gives no sense.

⁸ *i. e.* the destroyer, see verse 25, though in reality this is God Himself since an appeal is made to the oaths and covenants made with the fathers; but, as the next verse shows, the wrath (which is the same as the destroyer) is regarded as quite distinct and is spoken of as being beaten back.

Bringing to remembrance the oaths and covenants of the fathers.

23. For when the dead were now fallen in heaps upon one another,

Standing between,¹ he beat back the wrath,
He cleft asunder the way to the living.²

24. For upon his robe reaching to his feet was the whole world,

And the glories of the fathers upon the graving
of the stone with the four rows,

And Thy majesty upon the diadem of his head.³

25. To these did the destroyer yield; and (the people) regarded them with awe.⁴

For it was enough only to make trial of the wrath.⁵

¹ i.e. between the living and the dead; cp Num xvi 48.

² In explanation of this Goodrick pointedly quotes the Jerusalem Targum to Num xvi. 48: "Aaron stood in the midst in prayer, and made a division with his censer between the dead and between the living."

³ Cp Exod xxviii Philo, *Mos* ii 12, says: "The whole robe is blue, a picture of the air. The air is naturally deep-coloured, and is a full-length robe, for it flows from sky to earth. The flowers on it symbolize earth, and the pomegranates water, and the bells the fusion of earth and water. . . . Of the three elements, earth, air, water, of which and in which created beings have their being, the long robe with its hangings is a true representation. As the robe is one, so the three elements are of one category; and as the flowers and the pomegranates hang from the robe so in some fashion earth and water hang from the air, for it is their vehicle." So, too, of the breastplate which Philo regards as a symbol of the Zodiac; he says also that over the linen mitre (the "diadem") was a golden crown, and upon it the four sacred letters יהוה (the tetragrammaton), referring to Exod xxviii. 36.

⁴ The plural, "they feared," is the best attested reading, in this case "the people" must be the subject, and the word must be understood in the sense of regarding with awe. Some manuscripts read "he feared," making the destroyer the subject; but the destroyer is God's emissary (though see note 8 on p. 88), and as such could scarcely be spoken of as fearing these sacred emblems.

⁵ In the case of the Egyptians more than a "trial" of wrath was needed.

XIX. I-12. **The Crossing of the Red Sea.**

1. But upon the ungodly there came pitiless indignation right up to the end;¹
For He² foreknew also their future,
2. How they themselves changing their mind about the going away (of the Israelites),
And having speeded them on their way with eagerness,
They pursued them, having repented (of their purpose).
3. For while they were yet in the midst of (their) mourning,³
And making lamentation at the graves of (their) dead,
They perpetrated a further act of folly,⁴
And those whom they had cast out, entreating (them to go), these they pursued as fugitives.
4. For a deserved fate dragged them on to this end,⁵
And brought upon them forgetfulness of the things which had fallen (upon them),
That they might fill up the punishment still lacking to their torments,
5. And that Thy people might experience⁶ a marvellous journey,
But that they⁷ might find a strange death.
6. For the whole creation, (each part) in its several kind, was fashioned again anew,⁸

¹ *i. e.* until the final catastrophe in the Red Sea.

² *i. e.* God, understood from the previous line.

³ *Lit.* "having in hand their mourning"; the Greek expression is quite the equivalent of the English "having something in hand," being occupied with.

⁴ This gives the meaning of the Greek, which runs literally: "Another counsel of foolishness they drew upon themselves."

⁵ This is Goodrick's excellent rendering.

⁶ Reading with Codd. B^N, *πειράσῃ*, in reference to the wonderful passage of the Red Sea; this reading is preferable to *πειράσῃ*, "might journey."

⁷ *i. e.* the Egyptians.

⁸ "The writer explains the miracle of the passage of the Red Sea by the philosophical doctrine of the mutual inter-

Being subject to (Thy) several commandments,
That Thy servants might be guarded from
harm.

7. The cloud that shadowed the camp
Was seen, as also the dry land rising up out of the
water which stood there before,—
Out of the Red Sea an unhindered way,
And a grass-bearing plain out of the violent
surge;
8. Through which a whole nation ¹ passed, they who
were covered by Thy hand,
Beholding wondrous signs.
- 9 For like horses they roamed at large,
And like lambs they skipped about,
Praising Thee, O Lord, that had delivered
them.²
10. For they still remembered the things (that had
happened) during their sojourning,
How instead of the birth of cattle the land had
brought forth lice,³

change of the elements. As in *xvi. 21, 25*, nothing new came into being when a miracle occurred; there was only a transmutation of elements, in some ways comparable to that which is now suggested by physicists between radium and helium. Epictetus (*iii. 24*) writes: 'This cosmos is one city, and its constituent substance is one, and there must needs be a certain periodicity and surrender of one thing to another, some things being dissolved, and others combining, some things standing still and others moving'; and again (*fr. viii*): 'This variability is partaken of by both men and animals; and not only they, but the gods and the four elements are turned *up and down* in their transmutations, so that earth becomes water, and water air, and air *again* turns into aether; and the same process of transmutation takes place in the reverse way (*ἀνῳθεν κάτω*).' *The whole creation* (for the phrase cp. *Rom. viii. 22*) is involved in one miracle, because the writer regards the quantity of matter as constant. Any partial disturbance is followed by a corresponding reaction throughout the whole mass" (*Gregg. op. cit.*, pp. 182 f.).

¹ Reading with Bab N* *πάν ἔθνος* instead of *πανεθνεί*.

² Reading, with Codd. AC *ῥυσάμενον*, instead of *ῥυόμενον* (BN), "that dost deliver"; the reference is to a definite past act.

³ R.V. marg. "sandflies,"

And instead of water-creatures the river had cast up a multitude of frogs.

11. But afterwards they saw a new production of birds,

When, led on by desire, they asked for ¹luxurious dainties;

12. For, for (their) comfort, there came up for them quails from the sea.

XIX. 13-17. The Punishment of the Egyptians.

13. And the punishments came upon the sinners,
Not without tokens given beforehand, by the force of the thunders,²

And justly did they suffer through their own wickednesses,

For they practised a very grievous hatred of strangers.

14. For they did not receive those that knew them not when they came,³

But these ⁴enslaved the strangers (who had been) benefactors.⁵

15. And not only so, but their ⁶visitation shall be of another sort,⁷

Since they received as enemies those who were strangers;⁸

16. Whereas these ⁹with feastings

¹ Contrast the account in Num. xi. 4-23.

² Cp. Josephus (*Antiq.* II. xvi. 3). "Showers of rain also came down from the sky, and dreadful thunders and lightning with flashes of fire. Thunderbolts also were darted upon them; nor was there any indication of God's wrath which did not happen at this time. For a dark and dismal night oppressed them."

³ The reference is to the men of Sodom

⁴ i.e. the Egyptians.

⁵ In reference to Joseph.

⁶ i.e. that of the men of Sodom.

⁷ Reading ἅλλη τις.

⁸ i.e. the men of Sodom were at least consistent in their behaviour, not so the Egyptians (see verse 16); their punishment is therefore different from that of the Egyptians. Our author's presentation of things is rather different from the Old Testament account.

⁹ i.e. the Egyptians.

- Welcomed those who had already shared the
 same rights,
 (And then) vexed them with grievous labours.
 17. And, moreover, they were stricken with sight-
 lessness,
 Even as those at the doors of the righteous man,¹
 When being encompassed with yawning darkness
 Each sought for a way through his own doors.

XIX. 18-22. The Miraculous Transmutation of the Elements.

18. For the elements changing their order one with
 another,
 As in a psaltery the notes alter the character of
 the tune,—
 Yet they continue always (each) in (its several)
 sound,²
 As one may clearly divine from the sight of the
 things that have happened.³
 19. For land-creatures were turned into water-
 creatures,⁴
 And creatures that swim passed on to the
 earth;⁵
 20. Fire was master of its own power in water,
 And water forgot its quenching power;⁶
 21. Contrariwise, flames wasted not
 The flesh of creatures that soon perish (if) walk-
 ing in the midst of them,⁷

i. e. Lot. The blindness of the men of Sodom is compared with the Egyptian darkness.

² *i. e.* difference of melody is effected by a different combination of the same notes; so the elements produce differences of result by variety of combination, though the elements remain the same.

³ *i. e.* the things that happened during the Exodus.

⁴ Presumably the writer is referring to the Israelites who became "water-creatures" by going through the Red Sea!

⁵ In reference to the plague of frogs, Exod. viii. 3.

⁶ See notes on xvi. 17, 19.

⁷ Cp. xvi. 18 and note.

Nor were the easily-melted ice-like grains of ambrosial food melted.¹

22. For in all things, O Lord, Thou didst magnify
and glorify Thy people,
And didst not overlook them, standing by them
at every time and place.

¹ Cp. xvi. 22.

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